Strong jobs growth

Employers added 431,000 jobs last month; jobless rate falls to 3.6%. **News, Page 4**

Oscars night fallout

Will Smith resigns from motion picture academy after slap incident. **News, Page 5**

New gas mileage rules

Federal rules to require new cars to average 40 mpg starting in 2026. **News, Page 6**

Seasonable

Mostly sunny and breezy; high of 55. **Sports, Page 8**

Hartford Courant

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Trinity student dies in hit-and-run

Two others injured after being struck in Hartford collision

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

A 20-year-old Trinity College student was killed and two others injured, one seriously, after a hit-and-run next to campus Thursday night.

Jillian Hegarty of St. Johnsbury, Vt., a sophomore, and two fellow students were trying to cross New Britain Avenue when they were struck, police said. Hegarty died at Hartford Hospital, and the second student, a 19-year-old woman, was listed in critical but stable condition.

A third female student, who is 20, was treated for minor injuries and released, police said.

The deadly collision was captured on surveillance camera, and police found the gray Volkswagen Touareg they were looking for in New Haven on Friday, Lt. Aaron Boisvert said. No arrests had been announced by mid-afternoon.

Trinity relayed the news to students and their families in an email Friday morning.

"This hit-and-run accident comes as a great shock to us all," wrote Joe DiChristina, Trinity College vice president for student success and enrollment management. "Nothing could have prepared us for this kind of news and the senseless loss of life. It is simply heartbreaking."

"As a community, we ask that you take care of each other, provide comfort if you see someone in shock or distress and extend

Turn to Crash, *Page 3*



Flowers and balloons mark a memorial for Trinity College student Jillian Hegarty, who was killed in a hit-and-run at the intersection of New Britain Avenue and Henry Street in Hartford. **MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT**



At the intersection of Capitol Avenue and Broad Street in Hartford, Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz offers pens to state Rep. Sean Scanlon and state Sen. Paul Formica, right, after Gov. Ned Lamont, second from left, signed legislation to suspend the state's excise tax on gas. **MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT**

State's gas excise tax holiday takes effect

As prices drop about 25 cents, residents urged to report suspected gouging

Staff report

Gas prices should be 25 cents cheaper today than they would otherwise have been after Connecticut lawmakers voted to temporarily suspend the gasoline excise tax as of April 1. Gov. Ned Lamont marked the move, aimed at bringing relief from high prices driven in large part by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with an event.

The tax cut, which extends through June 30, does not apply to diesel fuel, propane or home heating oil.

Some lawmakers were concerned that the tax cut might not be passed along to drivers at the pump, but the eight-page bill mandates that they pass along the tax cut. State Attorney General William Tong urged drivers to report any price gouging they see to his office for investigation.

"It's important to remember that prices at the pump will continue to fluctuate along with changes in wholesale prices. Not every increase, or decrease, in gasoline prices is related to the $.25 tax or constitutes price gouging," Tong said in a press release. "Every complaint will be investigated and all facts will be assessed on a case-by-case basis."

Tong said in reporting cases of possible price gouging, residents should include receipts along with the address of the gas station, the date and time of your purchase, and the exact price paid.

Consumers can file complaints online through the Office of the Attorney General complaint portal: dir.ct.gov/ag/complaint.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Kremlin: Copters hit site in Russia

Ukraine denies role in explosion at fuel depot across border

By Nebi Qena and Yuras Karmanau
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Talks to stop the fighting in Ukraine resumed Friday, as another desperate attempt to stage a mass rescue for civilians from the encircled city of Mariupol and deliver aid failed and the Kremlin accused the Ukrainians of launching a helicopter attack on a fuel depot on Russian soil.

Ukraine denied responsibility for the fiery blast, but if Moscow's claim is confirmed, it would be the war's first known attack in which Ukrainian aircraft penetrated Russian airspace.

"Certainly, this is not something that can be perceived as creating comfortable conditions for the continuation of the talks," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, five weeks after Moscow began sending upward of 150,000 of its own troops across Ukraine's border.

Meanwhile, Russia continued withdrawing some of its ground forces from areas around Kyiv after saying earlier this week it would reduce military activity near the Ukrainian capital and the northern city of Chernihiv to promote trust at the bargaining table.

While the Russians kept up their bombardment of those two zones, Ukrainian troops exploited the pullback on the ground by mounting counterattacks and retaking a number of towns and villages.

Still, Ukraine and its allies warned that the Kremlin is not de-escalating but resupplying

Turn to Ukraine, *Page 2*

Conservationists offer to buy Deer Lake parcel



A conservationist group has made a seven-figure offer to the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scouts of America to purchase the Scout reservation in Killingworth known as Deer Lake. **COURTESY**

Seven-figure bid made to Boy Scouts council as developers make push

By Alex Putterman
Hartford Courant

A conservationist group has made the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scouts of America a seven-figure offer to purchase a popular scout reservation in Killingworth that will otherwise be sold to developers.

Ted Langevin, president of Pathfinders, Inc., said the group has collected about 150 pledges ranging from $20 to seven figures to buy the 253-acre parcel known as Deer Lake, which is currently used for camping, hiking, rock climbing and more.

Langevin would not say how much money Pathfinders, Inc. has raised in total but said he believes the group's offer is overall "superior" to the $4.6 million bid submitted by developers.

"We wouldn't have any contingencies, say, for zoning or how many lots or any of that kind of development stuff," he said. "And we would be keeping it green, which is more attuned to [the Connecticut Yankee Council's] mission."

Previously, the Connecticut Yankee Council had turned down a $2.4 million bid from the Trust

Turn to Deer Lake, *Page 2*



Connecticut guard Paige Bueckers. **FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP**

UConn women in Courant e-edition

Check out our e-edition for a four-page, digital-only section covering Friday's Final Four game between UConn and Stanford, which ended too late for our print editions. Go to courant.com and click on the Courant ENewspaper tab.

State residents with ties to Ukraine call for aid, peace

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine dragged into its sixth week, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake, a group of students and scholars assembled on the main quad of the University of New Haven, calling for peace and aid to those fleeing violence. **Connecticut, Page 1**

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Hartford Courant media group

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FROM PAGE ONE



Ukrainian soldiers approach a trench Friday that was used by Russian soldiers on the outskirts of Kyiv. **RODRIGO ABD/AP**

Ukraine

from Page 1

and shifting its troops to the country's east for an intensified assault on the mostly Russian-speaking Donbas region in the country's east, which includes Mariupol.

In a possible signal of the Kremlin's future plans for the conflict, hundreds of Syrian fighters are en route to join Russian forces in Ukraine, effectively returning the favor to Moscow for helping President Bashar Assad crush rebels in an 11-year civil war, according to two people monitoring the flow of mercenaries.

A first contingent of soldiers has arrived in Russia for military training before heading to Ukraine, according to a Western diplomat and a Damascus-based ally of the Syrian government. It includes at least 300 soldiers from a Syrian army division that has worked closely with Russian officers who went to Syria to support Assad during the war.

Meanwhile, the latest negotiations took place by video. At a round of talks earlier in the week, Ukraine said it would be willing to abandon a bid to join NATO and declare itself neutral — Moscow's chief demand — in return for security guarantees from several other countries.

The invasion has left thousands dead and driven more than 4 million refugees from Ukraine.

Mariupol, the shattered and besieged southern port city, has seen some of the worst suffering of the war. Its capture would be a major prize for Russian President Vladimir Putin, giving his country an unbroken land bridge to Crimea, seized from Ukraine in 2014.

Mariupol's fate could determine the course of the negotiations to end the war, said Volodymyr Fesenko, head of the Ukrainian think tank Penta.

"Mariupol has become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance," Fesenko said, "and without its conquest, Putin cannot sit down at the negotiating table." The fall of Mariupol, he said, "will open the way to a peace agreement."

About 3,000 civilians manage to escape Mariupol on Friday, Ukrainian officials said, but the Red Cross' attempt to orchestrate a mass evacuation and deliver aid to the city was unsuccessful.

The International Committee for the Red Cross said a team in a 45-bus convoy had been on its way but had to turn back. Ukrainian authorities said Russian troops stopped the convoy and seized 14 tons of food and medical supplies.

An adviser to the mayor's office said that buses already in the city left with civilians after Russia later agreed to open a corridor.

Around 100,000 people are believed left in the city, down from a prewar 430,000, and weeks of Russian bombardment and street fighting have caused severe shortages of water, food, fuel and medicine.

As for the fuel depot explosion, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said two Ukrainian helicopter gunships flew in extremely low and attacked the civilian oil storage facility on the outskirts of the city of Belgorod, about 16 miles north of the Ukrainian border.

The regional governor said two workers at the depot were wounded, but the Rosneft state oil company denied anyone was hurt.

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's national security council, said on Ukrainian television: "For some reason they say that we did it, but in fact this does not correspond with reality."

Amid the Russian pullback on the ground and its continued bombardment, Ukraine's military said it had retaken 29 settlements in the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions.

The New York Times contributed.

Deer Lake

from Page 1

for Public Land in favor of the larger development offer. Langevin said Pathfinders, Inc.'s offer does not include funding from the Trust for Public Land, which doesn't typically partner with outside groups.

Mark Kraus, the council's CEO, confirmed Friday that the council had received the offer from Pathfinders, Inc., which is now "in the hands of the realtor that handles all of the transactions," he said.

In a statement in February, the Connecticut Yankee Council said selling Deer Lake was necessary due to a dip in Boy Scout membership. The Boy Scouts of America declared bankruptcy in 2020, in part due to a wave of lawsuits from men who say they were sexually abused as members of the group.

The Connecticut Yankee Council, after initially setting a March 31 deadline for bids on Deer Lake, agreed this week to give to conservationists until May 1 to submit additional offers.

Since February, when the council first announced its intent to sell Deer Lake, locals have rallied fervently the conserve the property. As of Friday, a "Save Deer Lake" group on Facebook had 1,800 members, and elected officials from the local level up through U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal had voiced support for the cause.

In an email Friday, Killingworth First Selectman Nancy Gorski said she was encouraged by recent developments surrounding Deer Lake.

"I am pleased to see the deadline has been extended," Gorski said. "I am also pleased to see that Pathfinders has also submitted an offer for the property."

Langevin said he has been "very gratified by the response of the community" in its efforts to conserve Deer Lake.

"I have been surprised, but in retrospect I shouldn't have been," he said. "There are people who love the camp and have sent their families there for generation, there is the town who doesn't want development in the surrounding areas, and then there is also conservationists."

David Anderson, land campaigns manager for Save the Sound, a Connecticut-based environmental group, said he wasn't surprised by the outpouring.

"There's a real passionate level of support for preservation," he said. "The more people who become aware of this the more people there are in support of conservation."

Langevin said Pathfinders, Inc. is still looking to raise money and that people interested in supporting the group's bid should email savedeerlakecamp@gmail.com. No one will be asked to transfer money until a deal is agreed to, he said.

Alex Putterman can be reached at aputterman@courant.com.

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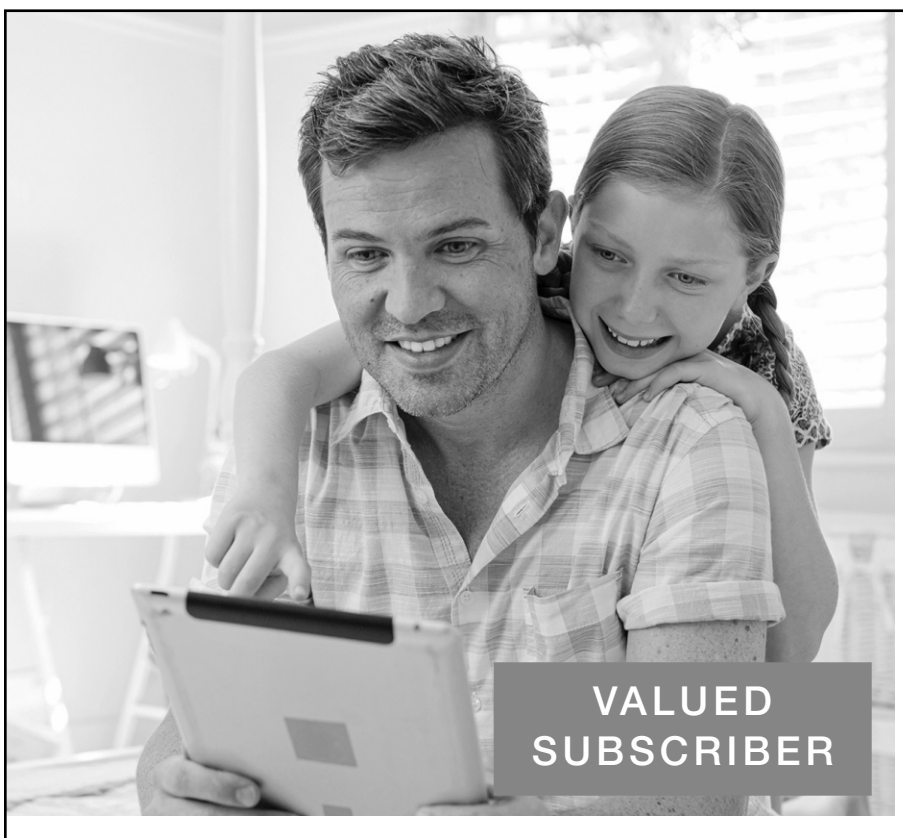


LOTTERY
Friday, April 1

PLAY3 DAY
0 3 8 **WB:** 3

PLAY4 DAY
8 4 3 0 **WB:** 8

THURSDAY'S LATE NUMBERS
PLAY3 NIGHT
7 4 4 **WB:** 7
PLAY4 NIGHT
4 5 8 7 **WB:** 9
CASH 5
6 10 17 19 23
LUCKY FOR LIFE
8 20 36 41 45 **LB:** 17
Tuesday's est. Lotto jackpot: $1.6 million
Tonight's est. Powerball jackpot:
$222 million



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FROM PAGE ONE

Military claims big prize in suburb of Kyiv

Ukrainians retaking Irpin slows Russia's advance on capital

By Andrew E. Kramer
The New York Times



A soldier offers aid to 82-year-old Larysa Kolesnyk after she was evacuated Wednesday from Irpin, Ukraine. **RODRIGO ABD/AP**

IRPIN, Ukraine — Creeping forward block by block, Ukrainian soldiers in a reconnaissance unit this week found signs of a retreating Russian army everywhere: a charred armored vehicle, abandoned body armor and the traditional blue-and-white striped underwear issued to Russian soldiers cast aside in a forest.

What they did not encounter was the Russian army in any organized state. After a month of savage street fighting, one of the most pivotal battles in the war ended — at least for now — with an improbable victory in Irpin for Ukraine's outgunned and outnumbered military.

By Tuesday, Ukrainian forces had quashed any significant Russian resistance in this strategic outlying town near Kyiv.

Pockets of Russian soldiers remained, posing risks. A firefight erupted in the afternoon when Ukrainian soldiers destroyed a lone Russian armored personnel carrier in an otherwise empty neighborhood, according to a commander.

But Ukraine's military had essentially recaptured Irpin, a town both strategically and symbolically important as the closest the Russian army had gotten to Kyiv, just 3 miles away. Its success in driving the Russians away may have factored into the peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul on Tuesday, when the sides achieved what appeared to be their most substantive progress to date.

Moscow promised to reduce "by multiples" the intensity of its military activity around Kyiv, an area that includes Irpin, in effect acknowledging that its advance toward the capital had stalled and was at least in some places being pushed back.

With superior numbers and weaponry, Russia could mount another assault on Irpin. And Ukrainian security experts expressed skepticism about Russia's pledge to pull back.

"They will not abandon plans to take the capital," said Oleksandr Danylyuk, a former secretary of Ukraine's Security and Defense Council.

Still, some people saw the recapture of Irpin as a moral victory, even if the military gains may be tentative.

Kyiv was always the biggest prize for the Russian military, as the seat of government and a city ingrained in both Russian and Ukrainian identity. But the Ukrainian military's performance in the vicious street fighting in an arc of outlying towns and villages became emblematic of the challenges Russian forces would face as they attempted to encircle or capture the capital.

In its attempt to capture Kyiv, the Russian military was bedeviled by logistical setbacks as it advanced in lumbering tank columns into the urban environment of the suburbs, where armored vehicles are vulnerable to ambushes.

Over a month of fighting, with Ukraine's military putting up fierce resistance, the losses piled up.

Western and Ukrainian officials have said for weeks that the Russians have taken heavy casualties in these suburban battles. That was on display Tuesday, as the Ukrainian reconnaissance unit pushed into a scene of destruction in a neighborhood of one-story homes in Irpin.

The give-and-take of the fighting for nearly a month left a sprawl of burned or blown-up buildings, tank tracks in the roads and scattered bullet cartridges.

The area had been a base for Russian special operations soldiers, or Spetsnaz, and ethnic Chechens fighting on Russia's side, according to Western military analysts and Ukrainian soldiers.

Here, as elsewhere in the fighting around Kyiv, the Ukrainian military achieved its battlefield success by deploying small, fast-moving units largely on foot that staged ambushes or defended sites with the benefit of local knowledge. Many such units are based in central Kyiv, commuting to the war zone by car.

The reconnaissance unit that patrolled Irpin on Tuesday, a part of Ukraine's military intelligence agency, uses as its base a shuttered bar in Kyiv, now cluttered with sleeping bags, boxes of ammunition and hand grenades.

At dawn Tuesday, the soldiers strapped on body armor and pouches of ammunition, then jumped in place to ensure their gear was well attached. The bar's stereo played Ukrainian folk songs.

The front in Irpin was a quick drive away. The soldiers filtered into the town in groups of three or four, to avoid drawing Russian artillery, then regrouped in a maze of back streets.

"We are defending our land," said a commander of one of the two squads, consisting of eight men each. He asked to be identified only by his first name, Bohdan. While the Russian military has pulled back in force, he said, Ukrainian soldiers still must search house to house in the city to flush out pockets of remaining enemy soldiers.

"We move into a neighborhood and if there is contact, we fire or call in artillery," he said of these operations. "If there is no contact, well, then it is clear this territory is again ours."

The mayor of Irpin, a once quiet and leafy suburb with a prewar population of 70,000, said that all but about 4,000 civilians had fled. The patrol encountered only one elderly man, who waved from behind a window of a house.



A juror in Ghislaine Maxwell's trial failed to disclose being sexually abused as a child. **ROB KIM/GETTY 2014**

Judge refuses to toss Maxwell's sex trafficking conviction

By Tom Hays and Larry Neumeister
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A U.S. judge refused to throw out Ghislaine Maxwell's sex trafficking conviction Friday, despite a juror's failure to disclose before the trial that he'd been a victim of childhood sexual abuse.

Maxwell, a British socialite, was convicted in December of helping the millionaire Jeffrey Epstein sexually abuse several teenage girls.

U.S. Judge Alison Nathan declined to order a new trial weeks after questioning the juror under oath in a New York courtroom about why he failed to disclose his personal history as an abuse survivor on a questionnaire during the jury selection process.

The juror had said he "skimmed way too fast" through the questionnaire and did not intentionally give the wrong answer to a question about sex abuse.

"I didn't lie in order to get on this jury," he said.

In an opinion certain to trigger a higher court appeal, Nathan said the juror's failure to disclose his prior sexual abuse during the jury selection process was highly unfortunate, but not deliberate.

The judge also concluded the juror "harbored no bias toward the defendant and could serve as a fair and impartial juror."

Had the juror answered the questions correctly, Maxwell's lawyers had said they potentially could have objected to the man's presence on the jury on the grounds that he might not be fair to a person accused of a similar crime.

The U.S. attorney's office declined comment Friday. Messages were also left with Maxwell's attorneys.

Maxwell, 60, was convicted of sex trafficking and other charges after a monthlong trial that featured testimony from four women who said she played a role in setting them up for abuse by Epstein.

Epstein killed himself in August 2019 as he awaited trial at a federal jail in New York on related sex trafficking charges.

Maxwell says she's innocent.

After the trial's conclusion, the juror, identified in court papers only as Juror No. 50, gave interviews with several media outlets describing deliberations, and disclosing that he'd been abused as a child.

Crash

from Page 1

extra grace to each other in the days and weeks ahead — and please remember to take care of yourself. I am grateful for the efforts of our Student Life team who are making extra efforts to check in with students this morning and to provide resources for those who need extra help processing this news."

The college planned to hold an event for students at 4 p.m. Friday in the chapel to remember Hegarty.

"Regardless of how well you knew Jillian or how you are processing this news, it can be helpful for anyone seeking to make sense of this moment or who simply needs to sit in the presence of others," DiChristina said.

'Perfect role model'

Hegarty was remembered by her high school headmaster as a "perfect role model" and a talented dancer with a sense of humor.

Dr. Sharon Howell, headmaster of St. Johnsbury Academy in St. Johnsbury, Vt., said "an entire community in St. Johnsbury is mourning and in shock today.

"The best way to describe Jillian is the perfect role model," Howell said in an email. "She was a talented dancer, whom every young girl looked up to."

Howell said Hegarty was in student government at SJA, a camp counselor for area youth, a counselor for Camp I Wanna Have Fun, a student orientation leader, HALO and Operation Creation counselor, athlete, community service volunteer, and more.

"In her free time she worked at a local restaurant greeting those in our community and welcoming visitors to the area," Howell said. "She was known for her smile and her great sense of humor. Anyone who knew Jillian loved her, and her loss is devastating."

In 2019, while at the academy, Hegarty was honored as an AP Scholar with Honor, which meant earning an "average grade of 3.25 on all exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more exams," according to the school.

The hit-and-run happened at the intersection with Henry Street — directly in front of a dorm — shortly before 11:40 p.m. Boisvert said. All three students were taken to the hospital; one was unresponsive.

Police began investigating and learned that the students were trying to cross New Britain Avenue when they were struck by an eastbound car. The driver left the scene, continuing to drive east, Boisvert said.

Trinity junior Michael Kulik of New Jersey said the intersection, where The Tap Cafe sits, gets a lot of student foot traffic.

"People are always walking through, especially on a Thursday night," he said.

Student tried to save her

Trinity College sophomore Yuyao Wang saw the aftermath of the hit-and-run. He said he was sitting at the table in his dorm doing homework late Thursday when he heard it.

Wang said a fellow student and friend ran down the stairs, out the front door and did chest compressions on the unresponsive woman while Wang called 911.

Kulik and his roommate, Jack Impronto, also live in a nearby dorm but slept through the the collision. When they heard about it Friday morning through word of mouth, online reports and the email from the college, "our hearts just dropped," said Impronto, of Glastonbury.

As for the way it happened, with the driver leaving the scene, Kulik said, "That's just disgusting."



Two Trinity College seniors place flowers at a street-side memorial for student Jillian Hegarty, who was killed at the intersection of New Britain Avenue and Henry Street. A hit-and-run driver injured two additional Trinity College students who were with Hegarty, police say. **MARK MIRKO PHOTOS/HARTFORD COURANT**

Throughout the day Friday, students dropped off flowers at a makeshift memorial on the sidewalk near the scene.

Two of them were seniors who said they didn't know Hegarty. One is a member of the Trinity College wrestling team, the other a lacrosse player.

A short time later, two more male students added flowers to the memorial.

Each briefly clasped his hands in front of him and bowed his head in prayer.

Boisvert said the cause of the accident is under investigation.

According to Hartford deputy chief Ian Powell, it was the fifth motor vehicle fatality in Hartford this year. Four of those have involved pedestrians.

"With warmer weather as we get into spring and summertime, we see a large increase in pedestrian traffic. We see a large increase in vehicles on our streets," Powell said. "We encourage everybody to be cautious, be aware of their surroundings. And that goes for both folks crossing the street and people who are operating their motor vehicles."



Flowers rest at a memorial for Hegarty

Hartford police are asking that anyone who saw the collision or knows what led up to it to call 860-757-4000 or the anonymous tip line at 860-722-8477 (TIPS.)

Information from the Courant's Helen Bennett and Kellie Love was used in this report.

WORLD&NATION
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March adds to strong hiring streak

US run of at least 400,000 new jobs grows to 11 months

By Paul Wiseman
Associated Press



A government report said employers added 431,000 jobs in March, shrinking unemployment to 3.6%. **MATT ROURKE/AP 2021**

America's employers extended a streak of robust hiring in March, adding 431,000 jobs in a sign of the economy's resilience in the face of a still-destructive pandemic, Russia's war against Ukraine and the highest inflation in 40 years.

The government's report Friday showed that last month's job growth helped shrink the unemployment rate to 3.6%. That's the lowest rate since the pandemic erupted two years ago and just above the half-century low of 3.5% that was reached two years ago.

Despite the inflation surge, persistent supply bottlenecks, damage from COVID-19 and now a war in Europe, employers have added at least 400,000 jobs for 11 straight months. In its report, the government also sharply revised up its estimate of hiring in January and February by a combined 95,000 jobs.

The job growth in March, though solid, was the lowest since September and slightly below what economists had expected. Still, Vincent Reinhart, chief economist at Dreyfus and Mellon, said the numbers show that "the U.S. economy continues to have underlying momentum and that firms are taking workers when they can."

The March report sketched a bright picture of the job market, with steady hiring and rising wages. Average hourly pay has risen a strong 5.6% over the past 12 months, welcome news for employees across the economy. For leisure and hospitality workers, including people who work in hotels, restaurants and bars, average pay has jumped 11.8% from a year earlier — "a clear sign that employers are desperate for staff," said Saru Jayaraman, president of One Fair Wage, which advocates for better pay and conditions for service employees.

For most workers, though, pay raises aren't keeping up with the spike in inflation that has put the Federal Reserve on track to raise rates multiple times, perhaps aggressively, in the coming months. Those rate hikes will result in costlier loans for many consumers and businesses. In the meantime, worker pay raises, a response in many cases to labor shortages, are themselves feeding the economy's inflation pressures.

The steady job growth has failed to buoy President Joe Biden's flagging popularity, with the gains overshadowed in the public's mind by chronically high inflation. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine driving oil and gasoline prices higher, Biden has announced plans to release a million barrels of oil daily from the U.S. strategic reserve for the next six months.

Since the pandemic struck in 2020, many Americans have remained on the sidelines of the job market, a trend that has contributed to the worker shortage in many industries. But in an encouraging sign for the economy, 418,000 people began looking for a job in March, and many found one. Over the past year, 3.8 million people have rejoined the labor force, meaning they now either have a job or are looking for one.

Across the economy, hiring gains were widespread last month. Restaurants and bars added 61,000 jobs, retailers 49,000, manufacturers 38,000 and hotels 25,000. Construction jobs rose by 19,000 and have now returned to their pre-pandemic level.

Some economists sounded a note of caution, though, suggesting that the prospect of much higher borrowing rates engineered by the Fed will inevitably slow the job market and the overall economy.

"We continue to expect that the Federal Reserve will move rates up expeditiously to counter surging inflation, and that this report only adds more urgency to their plans to do so," said Mike Fratantoni, chief economist at the Mortgage Bankers Association.

For now, the job market continues to rebound from the coronavirus recession. Fueled by generous federal aid, savings amassed during the pandemic and ultra-low borrowing rates orchestrated by the Fed, U.S. consumers have spent so fast that many factories, warehouses, shipping companies and ports have failed to keep pace with their customer demand. Supply chains have snarled, forcing up prices.

The proportion of Americans who are either working or looking for work — the so-called labor force participation rate — ticked up to 62.4% last month, the highest since the early days of the pandemic in March 2020. Even so, the participation rate remains a full percentage point below its pre-pandemic level, limiting the pool of potential job applicants employers can choose from. Many Americans remain on the sidelines because of lingering health concerns and trouble finding child care.

"You can't keep adding 400,000 workers a month without running out of workers," said Reinhart, a former high-ranking Fed economist.

Reinhart said he expects higher interest rates, on top of the expiration of government aid, to eventually slow hiring to "a more sustainable" pace.

"The bad news," he said, "is we haven't yet recovered the pre-pandemic level of employment, and it will take longer" to get there.

Labor Secretary Marty Walsh suggested Friday that the streak of hiring gains may be "sustainable for a little while" but that "the key to us going forward" would be drawing more Americans back to the job market.

Jan. 6 panel puts Garland in a precarious position

Committee calling on the AG to act as probe continues

By Farnoush Amiri and Michael Balsamo
Associated Press



Attorney General Merrick Garland has spent his tenure trying to shield the Department of Justice from political pressure. **KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS**

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol are increasingly going public with critical statements, court filings and more to deliver a blunt message to Attorney General Merrick Garland and the Department of Justice.

President Donald Trump and his allies likely committed crimes, they say. And it's up to you to do something about it.

"Attorney General Garland, do your job so we can do ours," prodded Rep. Elaine Luria of Virginia.

"We are upholding our responsibility. The Department of Justice must do the same," echoed Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif.

Their rhetoric, focused this week on two contempt of Congress referrals approved by the committee, is just the latest example of the pressure campaign the lawmakers are waging. It reflects a stark reality: While they can investigate Jan. 6 and issue subpoenas to gather information, only the Justice Department can bring criminal charges.

Committee members see the case they are building against Trump and his allies as a once-in-a-generation circumstance. If it's not fully prosecuted, they say, it could set a dangerous precedent that threatens the foundations of American democracy.

The lawmakers seem nearly certain to send a criminal referral to the Justice Department once their work is through.

It all puts Garland, who has spent his tenure trying to shield the Justice Department from political pressure, in a precarious spot. Any criminal charges related to Jan. 6 would trigger a firestorm, thrusting prosecutors back into the partisan crossfire that proved so damaging during the Trump-Russia influence investigation and an email probe of Hillary Clinton.

Garland has given no public indication about whether prosecutors might be considering a case against the former president. He has, though, vowed to hold accountable "all January 6th perpetrators, at any level" and has said that would include those who were "present that day or were otherwise criminally responsible for the assault on our democracy."

Parts of the department's investigation have overlapped with the committee's. One example is in late January when Justice announced it had opened a probe into a fake slate of electors who falsely tried to declare Trump the winner of the 2020 election in seven swing states that Joe Biden won. Three days later, lawmakers subpoenaed more than a dozen people involved in the effort.

But the Jan. 6 committee wants more. Their message was amplified this week when a federal judge in California — District Judge David Carter, a President Bill Clinton appointee — wrote that it is "more likely than not" that Trump himself committed crimes in his attempt to stop the certification of the 2020 election.

The practical effect of that ruling was to order the release of more than 100 emails from Trump adviser John Eastman to the Jan. 6 Committee. But lawmakers zeroed in on a particular passage in the judge's opinion that characterized Jan. 6 as a "coup."

But experts caution that Carter's opinion was only in a civil case and does not meet the long-standing charging policy the Justice Department is required to meet. Justin Danilewitz, a Philadelphia-based attorney and former federal prosecutor, noted the department faces a higher burden of proof in court to show that presidential immunity should not apply.

And Danilewitz said the legal advice Trump received from Eastman "undermines an inference of corrupt or deceitful intent."

The department will be guided by the evidence and law, he said, "but the social and political ramifications of a decision of this kind will not be far from the minds of Attorney General Garland and his staff."

"A decision to bring or not bring criminal charges will have significant ripple effects," he added.

Another point of friction with the Justice Department is the effort to enforce subpoenas through contempt of Congress charges.

The House approved a contempt referral against former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows in December after he ceased cooperating with the Jan. 6 panel. While an earlier contempt referral against former Trump adviser Steve Bannon resulted in an indictment, the Department of Justice has been slower to decide whether to prosecute Meadows.

A decision to pursue the contempt charges against Meadows would have to come from career prosecutors in the U.S. attorney's office in Washington before senior Justice Department officials would weigh in and decide how to proceed.

Man with 'almost a small armory' in truck near US Capitol riot sentenced

By Michael Kunzelman
Associated Press

An Alabama man who parked a pickup truck filled with weapons and Molotov cocktail components near the U.S. Capitol on the day of last year's riot was sentenced Friday to nearly four years in prison.

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly said she still hasn't heard an explanation for why Lonnie Leroy Coffman had "almost a small armory in his truck, ready to do battle." She sentenced Coffman to three years and 10 months in prison, giving him credit for the more than one year he already has served since his arrest.

Coffman, 72, of Falkville, Alabama, said he never intended to hurt anybody or destroy any property. He said he drove to Washington alone "to try to discover just how true and secure was the (2020 presidential) election."

"If I had any idea that things would turn out like they did, I would have stayed home," he wrote in a handwritten letter to the judge.

More than 770 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Capitol riot, when supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed the building in an effort to disrupt lawmakers' formal certification of his reelection defeat.

Five people died and scores of Capitol Police officers were seriously injured.

Over 240 participants in the attack have pleaded guilty, mostly to misdemeanors punishable by a maximum of six months imprisonment. More than 130 have been sentenced. Coffman is one of nine defendants whose prison sentence exceeds one year.

Coffman, a Vietnam War veteran who served in the U.S. Army, pleaded guilty in November to possession of an unregistered firearm and carrying a pistol without a license. He was carrying a loaded handgun and revolver without a license as he walked in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, 2021, according to prosecutors. He isn't accused of entering the Capitol or joining the mob during the riot that day.

When Coffman parked his truck a few blocks from the Capitol on the morning of Jan. 6, it contained a handgun, a rifle, a shotgun, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, a crossbow, machetes, a stun gun and a cooler containing eleven mason jars with holes punched in the lids, according to prosecutors. Each jar contained a mixture of gasoline and Styrofoam, which are components of the homemade incendiary devices called Molotov cocktails, prosecutors said.

Law enforcement officers found the cache of weapons and ammunition when they searched Coffman's truck.

Later, investigators also found Molotov cocktail components at Coffman's home in Alabama.

WORLD & NATION

NEWS BRIEFING

Decriminalizing pot at federal level gets approval from House

From news services

WASHINGTON — Marijuana would be decriminalized at the federal level under legislation the House approved Friday as Democrats made the case for allowing states to set their own policies on pot.

The bill is unlikely to become law since it is expected to die in the Senate. That would mirror what happened when a similar House-passed measure removing marijuana from the list of federally-controlled substances went nowhere in the Senate two years ago.

Still, Friday's vote gave lawmakers the chance to state their view on a decriminalization push that appears to have broad support with voters across the country. Measures to legalize recreational pot breezed to victory in 2020 in progressive New Jersey, moderate Arizona and conservative Montana and South Dakota.

The House approved the bill Friday with a mostly party-line vote of 220-204. All but two voting Democrats backed the measure, while only three Republicans did.

The measure would require federal courts to expunge prior marijuana convictions and conduct resentencing hearings for those completing their sentences. It also authorizes a 5% sales tax on marijuana and marijuana products that would be used for grant programs focused on job training, substance abuse treatment and loans to help disadvantaged small businesses get into the marijuana industry.

Democrats said the nation's federal prohibition on marijuana has had particularly devastating consequences for minority communities.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., cited statistics that showed Black Americans were four times more likely than white Americans to be arrested for marijuana possession, even though they use it at similar rates.

Republicans who opposed the measure said marijuana is a gateway drug that would lead to greater use of opioids and other dangerous substances. They also said decriminalization is not the priority lawmakers should be focused on now.

Pope apologizes: Pope Francis on Friday made a historic apology to Indigenous peoples for "deplorable" abuses suffered in Canada's Catholic-run residential schools.

Francis begged forgiveness during an audience with dozens of members of the Metis, Inuit and First Nations communities who came to Rome seeking a papal apology and a commitment from the Catholic Church to repair the damage.

More than 150,000 native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools from the 19th century until the 1970s in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes and culture. The aim was to Christianize and assimilate them into mainstream society, which previous Canadian governments considered superior.

The Canadian government has admitted that physical and sexual abuse was rampant at the schools, with students beaten for speaking their native languages. That legacy of that abuse and isolation from family has been cited by Indigenous leaders as a root cause of the epidemic rates of alcohol and drug addiction now on Canadian reservations.



Coal mine collapse: People grieve after an accident Friday at a coal mine in Aleksinac, Serbia, killed eight miners and injured 18 others, authorities said. A broadcast report and other local media said part of the Soko mine collapsed, releasing methane gas while the miners were trapped. An accident at the same site killed 29 miners in 1998. **SASA DJORDJEVIC/GETTY-AFP**

COVID-19 asylum limits: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Friday that it is ending a policy that limited asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The government said it was already making plans to erect tents and take other steps to prepare for an expected influx of migrants.

The continued use of public health powers had been widely criticized by Democrats and immigration advocates as an excuse for the United States to shirk its obligations to provide haven to people fleeing persecution.

The policy went into effect under President Donald Trump in March 2020. Since then, migrants trying to enter the U.S. have been expelled more than 1.7 million times.

The policy, known as the Title 42 authority, is named for a 1944 public health law to prevent communicable disease. The termination of the policy starts May 23.

Truce accepted: Yemen's warring sides have accepted a two-month truce, starting with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the U.N. envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, said Friday.

The agreement comes after a significant escalation in recent weeks that saw Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels claim several attacks across the country's borders, targeting the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

The truce is to start on Saturday, the first day of Ramadan, and will also allow for shipments of fuel to arrive in the Yemen's key port city of Hodeida and for passenger flights to resume from the airport in the capital, Sanaa.

U.N. spokesperson Farhan Haq said the warring sides agreed to halt all offensive military, air, ground and maritime operations inside Yemen and across its borders, starting at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Abducted US man: An American man kidnapped in Afghanistan two years ago is seen in a video pleading for his release so he can be reunited with his family, according to a recording posted Friday by The New Yorker magazine.

The video of Mark Frerichs marks the first time the Navy veteran and civilian contractor has been seen by the public since his abduction in Kabul on Jan. 31, 2020.

Frerichs, of Lombard, Illinois, is believed to be held by the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network.

Frerichs appears by himself in the video, which he says was recorded last Nov. 28, sitting upright before a curtain and wearing what appears to be traditional Afghan clothing.

Videos of hostages are sometimes released to show proof that they are alive and to facilitate negotiations for a release.

China lockdown: About 16 million residents in Shanghai are being tested for the coronavirus during the second stage of the lockdown that shifted Friday to the western half of China's biggest city.

Meanwhile, residents of Shanghai's eastern districts who were supposed to be released from four days of isolation have been told their lockdowns could be extended if COVID-19 cases are found in their residential compounds.

The lockdown in Shanghai, being done in two phases over eight days to enable testing of its entire population.

Government workers and volunteers wearing full protective equipment went door-to-door with megaphones in the city with 26 million people, calling on residents to report for testing at designated sites.



Will Smith has tendered his resignation from the body that awards the Oscars. **PATRICK T. FALLON/GETTY-AFP**

Smith resigns from motion picture academy over slap

By Lynn Elber
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Will Smith resigned Friday from the motion picture academy following his Oscars night slap of Chris Rock and said he would accept any further punishment the organization imposed.

Smith in a statement released Friday afternoon said he will "fully accept any and all consequences for my conduct. My actions at the 94th Academy Awards presentation were shocking, painful, and inexcusable."

Film academy president David Rubin said Smith's resignation was accepted.

"We will continue to move forward with our disciplinary proceedings against Mr. Smith for violations of the Academy's Standards of Conduct, in advance of our next scheduled board meeting on April 18."

"I betrayed the trust of the Academy. I deprived other nominees and winners of their opportunity to celebrate and be celebrated for their extraordinary work," his statement said. "I am heartbroken. I want to put the focus back on those who deserve attention for their achievements and allow the Academy to get back to the incredible work it does to support creativity and artistry in film.

"Change takes time and I am committed to doing the work to ensure that I never again allow violence to overtake reason," Smith concluded in the statement.

The resignation came two days after the academy's leadership board met to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Smith for violations against the group's standards of conduct.

On Sunday, Smith strode from his Dolby Theatre seat on to the stage and smacked Rock, who had made a joke at the expense of Smith's wife, Jada Pinkett Smith. Later, he went on to win the best actor award for his role in "King Richard."



Soaring prices amid Ukraine war casts pall over Ramadan

By Zeina Karam
Associated Press



Girls hold traditional lanterns during street performances celebrating the upcoming Muslim holy month of Ramadan on Thursday in Sidon, Lebanon. **MOHAMMED ZAATARI/AP**

BEIRUT — Muslim-majority nations, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and the United Arab Emirates, declared that the holy month of Ramadan, when the faithful observe a dawn-to-dusk fast, would begin at sunrise Saturday.

But the raging war in Ukraine, which has sent energy and food prices soaring across much of the Arab world, casts a shadow this year over Islam's holiest month, when large gatherings over meals and family celebrations are a tradition.

Many had been hoping for a more cheerful Ramadan, after the coronavirus pandemic cut off the world's 2 billion Muslims from cherished Ramadan rituals for the past two years. Instead, many find even the most basic items are too expensive to buy this year.

The Saudi statement — based on a moon-sighting methodology — was broadcast on the kingdom's state-run Saudi TV.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi and de facto leader of the United Arab Emirates, congratulated Muslims on the arrival of Ramadan.

"We solemnly pray that God continues to bestow his blessings and mercy on our beloved country and people everywhere," he wrote on Twitter.

In Beirut, celebrations were muted and many residents expressed shock at the surge in food prices, which have soared further after Russia's invasion of Ukraine last month.

The Lebanese have been facing their nation's worst economic crisis over the past two years as the currency collapsed and the country's middle class was plunged into poverty. The small Mediterranean country's meltdown has also brought on severe shortages in electricity, fuel and medicine.

"It is not like every year, because most people don't have electricity to buy items to store and prepare themselves for Ramadan," said Moheidein Bazazo, who owns a grocery shop in the Zoqaq el-Blat neighborhood in Beirut.

Many shelves in Bazazo's shop were empty on the eve of Ramadan. He said he was even struggling to get flour, buying it on the black market at high prices.

Hassan Ibrahim, a shopper, said he couldn't keep up with the prices. "Only those who are stealing or selling drugs or politicians can live. Other than that, no one else can," he said.

Some among Lebanon's Shiites, as well as Shiites in Iran and Iraq, were marking the start of Ramadan a day later, and would begin fasting on Sunday.

Jordan, a predominantly Sunni country, also said the first day of Ramadan would be on Sunday, in a break from following Saudi Arabia. The kingdom's Petra news agency said the Islamic religious authority was unable to spot the crescent moon indicating the beginning of the month.

It was not immediately clear if Jordan's decision had political motives. In 2019, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank were at odds with Saudi Arabia for the first time in recent history in declaring what day Ramadan would end on. At the time, this was believed to be a veiled protest against Saudi Arabia and Gulf Arab countries' support for then-President Donald Trump's plan for the Mideast, which many saw as favoring Israel at the expense of Palestinians.

In Afghanistan, where the Taliban seized control of the country last August, the high court announced the first day of Ramadan would be Saturday, said Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, in a tweet. Pakistan, where Sunni Muslims are the majority, would begin fasting on Saturday.

Muslims follow a lunar calendar, and a moon-sighting methodology can lead to different countries declaring the start of Ramadan a day or two apart.

Families across the region often go on shopping sprees before Ramadan to pick up dates, special Ramadan desserts and decorations. During Ramadan, Muslims must abstain from all eating, drinking or smoking from dawn to dusk each day for the entire month.

BUSINESS

Fed rules: New vehicles to average at least 40 mpg

Fuel economy requirements from the current 28 mpg to go into effect in '26

By Tom Krisher
Associated Press

DETROIT — New vehicles sold in the United States will have to travel an average of at least 40 mpg in 2026, up from about 28 mpg, under new federal rules unveiled Friday.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said its fuel economy requirements will undo a rollback of standards enacted under President Donald Trump. For the current model year, standards enacted under Trump require the fleet of new vehicles to get just under 28 mpg in real-world driving. The new requirements increase gas mileage by 8% per year for model years 2024 and 2025 and 10% in the 2026 model year.

Agency officials say the requirements are the maximum that the industry can achieve over the time period and will reduce gasoline consumption by more than 220 billion gallons over the life of vehicles, compared with the Trump standards.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, whose department includes the NHTSA, said the rules also will help strengthen national security by making the country less dependent on foreign oil and less vulnerable to volatile gasoline prices. Gasoline nationwide has spiked to an average of more than $4.22 per gallon, with much of the increase coming since Russia, a major oil producer, invaded Ukraine in late February. It cost $2.88 per gallon just a year ago, according to AAA.

Gas prices also have helped to fuel inflation to a 40-year high, eating up household budgets and hitting President Joe Biden's approval ratings.

"Transportation is the second-largest cost for American families, only behind housing," Buttigieg said. The new standards, he said, will help keep the U.S. more secure and preserve "the freedom of our country to chart its future without being subject to other countries and to the decisions that are being made in the boardrooms of energy companies."

But auto dealers say more stringent requirements drive up prices and push people out of an already expensive new-car market.

Trump's administration rolled back fuel economy standards, allowing them to rise 1.5% per year, which environmental groups said was inadequate to limit planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions that fuel climate change. The standards had been rising about 5% per year previously.

But the new standards won't immediately match those adopted through 2025 under President Barack Obama. NHTSA officials said they will equal the Obama standards by 2025 and slightly exceed them for the 2026 model year.

The Obama-era standards automatically adjusted for changes in the type of vehicles people are buying. When they were enacted in 2012, 51% of new vehicle sales were cars and 49% SUVs and trucks. Last year, 77% of new vehicle sales were SUVs and trucks, which generally are less efficient than cars.

Officials said that under the new standards, owners would save about $1,400 in gasoline costs during the lifetime of a 2029 model year vehicle.



Days after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, a currency exchange office in Moscow displays exchange rates. **PAVEL GOLOVKIN/AP**

Ruble's remarkable rebound

Recovery of Russian currency may mean Western sanctions are not as strong after all

By Ken Sweet and Ellen Knickmeyer
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The ruble is no longer rubble.

The Russian ruble bounced back this week from the fall it took after the U.S. and European allies moved to bury the Russian economy under thousands of new sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin has resorted to extreme financial measures to blunt the West's penalties and inflate his currency.

While the West has imposed unprecedented levels of sanctions against the Russian economy, Russia's Central Bank has jacked up interest rates to 20% and the Kremlin has imposed strict capital controls on those wishing to exchange their rubles for dollars or euros.

It's a monetary defense Putin may not be able to sustain as long-term sanctions weigh down the Russian economy. But the ruble's recovery could be a sign that the sanctions in their current form are not working as powerfully as Ukraine's allies counted on when it comes to pressuring Putin to pull his troops from Ukraine. It also could be a sign that Russia's efforts to artificially prop up its currency are working by leveraging its oil and gas sector.

The ruble has recently been trading at roughly 85 to the U.S. dollar, about where it was before Russia started its invasion on Feb. 24. The ruble had fallen as low as roughly 150 to the dollar March 7, when news emerged that the Biden administration would ban U.S. imports of Russian oil and gas.

Increasingly, European nations' purchases of Russian oil and natural gas are coming under scrutiny as a loophole and lifeline for the Russian economy.

"For Russia, everything is about their energy revenues. It's half their federal budget. It's the thing that props up Putin's regime and the war," said Tania Babina, an economist at Columbia University who was born in Ukraine.

Babina is currently working with a group of 200 Ukrainian economists to more accurately document how effective the West's sanctions are in stymying Putin's war-making capabilities.

The ruble has also risen amid reports that the Kremlin has been more open to ceasefire talks with Ukraine. U.S. and Western officials have expressed skepticism about Russia's announcement that it would dial back operations.

President Joe Biden promoted the success of the sanctions — some of the toughest ever imposed on a nation — while he was in Poland last month.

Russian efforts to counter those sanctions by propping up the ruble can only go so far.

Russia's Central Bank cannot keep raising interest rates because doing so will eventually choke off credit to businesses and borrowers. At some point, individuals and businesses will develop ways to go around Russia's capital controls by moving money in smaller amounts. As the penalties depress the Russian economy, economists say that will eventually weigh down the ruble. Without these efforts, Russia's currency would almost certainly be weaker.

But Russia's oil and gas exports have continued to Europe as well as to China and India. Those exports have acted as an economic floor for the Russian economy, which is dominated by the energy sector.

The White House and economists have argued that the impact of sanctions takes time, weeks or months for full effect as industries shut down due to a lack of materials or capital or both.

Amazon workers in NYC vote to unionize

By Haleluya Hadero and Anne D'Innocenzio
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Amazon workers in Staten Island, New York, voted to unionize on Friday, marking the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the retail giant's history and handing an unexpected win to a nascent group that fueled the union drive.

Warehouse workers cast 2,654 votes in favor of a union, giving the fledgling Amazon Labor Union enough support to pull off a victory. According to the National Labor Relations Board, which is overseeing the process, 2,131 workers rejected the union bid.

The 67 ballots that were challenged by either Amazon or the ALU were not enough to sway the outcome. About 57% of the more than 8,300 workers on the voter list cast their ballots.

Federal labor officials said the results of the count won't be verified until they process any objections that both parties may file. Any objections are due by April 8.

The victory was an uphill battle for the independent group, made up of former and current workers who lacked official backing from an established union and were out-gunned by the deep-pocketed retail giant.

Despite obstacles, organizers believed their grassroots approach was more relatable to workers and could help them overcome where established unions have failed in the past.

Tristan Dutchin, who began working for the online retailer about a year ago, is hopeful that the new union will improve working conditions at his workplace.

"I'm excited that we're making history," Dutchin said. "We're about to unionize a multibillion, trillion-dollar company. This will be a fantastic time for workers to be surrounded in a better, safer working environment."

Meanwhile, Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, appear to have rejected a union bid but outstanding challenged ballots could change the outcome. The vote was 993-875 against the union. A hearing to review 416 challenged ballots is expected to begin in the next few days.

European inflation climbs to record 7.5%

By Kelvin Chan
Associated Press

LONDON — Inflation in Europe soared to another record, according to new EU figures released Friday, in a fresh sign that rising energy prices fueled by Russia's war in Ukraine are squeezing consumers and adding pressure on the central bank to raise interest rates.

Consumer prices in the 19 countries that use the euro currency rose by an annual rate of 7.5% in March, according to the European Union statistics agency, Eurostat.

The latest reading smashed the high set just last month, when it hit 5.9%. It's the fifth straight month that inflation in the eurozone has set a record, bringing it to the highest level since record-keeping for the euro began in 1997.

Rising consumer prices are a growing problem around the world, making it more difficult for people to afford everything from groceries to their utility bills. Spiking energy costs are the main factor driving inflation in Europe, with those prices surging 44.7% last month, up from 32% in February, Eurostat said.

Oil and gas prices had already been rising because of increasing demand from economies recovering from the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic. They jumped higher after Russia, a major oil and gas producer, invaded Ukraine, on fears that sanctions and export restrictions could crimp supplies.

It's also getting more expensive to eat in Europe. Food costs, including alcohol and tobacco, rose 5%, compared with 4.2% in the prior month.

Prices also increased for goods like clothing, appliances, cars, computers and books, up 3.4% from the 3.1% set the month before, and for services, which were up 2.7% from 2.5%.

BUSINESS BRIEFING

UK opens probe into ferry firings

LONDON — The British government said Friday that a criminal investigation has begun into P&O Ferries after the company fired almost 800 U.K.-based crew without warning so they could be replaced by cheaper contract staff.

The Dubai-owned company has acknowledged it broke the law by not consulting unions before the mass firings March 17. But chief executive Peter Hebblethwaite said there was no other way to stop the ferry operator from going under.

The British government has vowed to reverse the firings but its option appear limited. It says it will introduce legislation that would force companies like P&O Ferries to pay the U.K. minimum wage at sea, as well as on land.

Alaska Airlines flights grounded

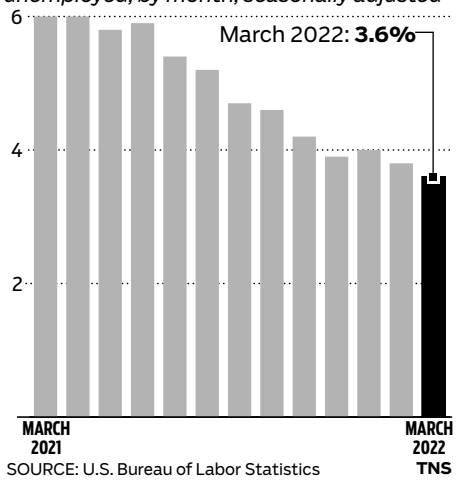
PORTLAND, Ore. — Dozens of flights along the West Coast were canceled Friday as Alaska Airlines pilots picketed during an impasse in contract negotiations with the airline that have lasted nearly three years.

More than 100 Alaska Airlines flights were canceled by the airline, including 66 in Seattle, 20 in Portland, Oregon, 10 in Los Angeles and seven in San Francisco, according to the flight tracking website flightaware.com. Flights were also affected in Anchorage, Alaska.

The union says Alaska Airlines did not adequately prepare for a return to air travel after the pandemic. Alaska Airlines said Friday that it values its pilots but it also needs to negotiate a deal that allows the airline to maintain growth and profitability.

Jobless rate

Percent of civilian labor force that is unemployed, by month, seasonally adjusted



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics TNS

BUSINESS



Operators work Tuesday at an Enagas plant in Barcelona, Spain. The energy crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine has Spain and Portugal in a favorable position. **EMILIO MORENATTI/AP**

Spain, Portugal an 'energy island' amid crisis in Europe

By Joseph Wilson and Hernan Munoz
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Amid the mayhem provoked in the world energy market by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Spain and Portugal have emerged in a strategically advantageous position as an "energy island" in Europe, with a relatively low reliance on Russian natural gas.

Leaders in renewable energy thanks to solar, wind and hydraulic power, Spain and Portugal are now poised to reap the benefits of long-term investments in liquefied natural gas, or LNG.

With six LNG plants in Spain — including Europe's largest, in Barcelona — and one in Portugal, the Iberian neighbors account for one-third of Europe's LNG processing capacity. The port-based terminals turn boatloads of supercooled LNG back into gas that then flows into homes and businesses.

Spain and Portugal are set to receive more gas imports, along with the rest of Europe, after the United States announced last month that it would help its allies reduce their dependence on Russian gas.

The war has turned Europe's dependence on Russian gas into a critical strategic liability. In a rush to find alternatives, European Union leaders want to accelerate mid- to long-term goals to shift further into renewable energy, while finding alternative sources of natural gas in the meantime. Russia has kept the gas flowing for now but has turned off the taps in the past during spats with Ukraine and Belarus.

The crisis also has shown that the EU, despite being a common market for 27 nations, has major internal bottlenecks in its energy distribution system.

The LNG arriving to Spain could in theory be sent on to needier neighbors further east, but there's no easy way to get it there. Spain and France share two small gas pipelines that can transport the equivalent of seven boatloads of LNG each month, while Spain received 27 boatloads at its terminals in March, in addition to natural gas pumped through an Algerian pipeline, according to Enagas.

There is talk in Madrid and Brussels about reviving a plan to build a larger pipeline for gas and green hydrogen energy to cross the Pyrenees, but even if that gets funding, it would take several years to start working. And there would still need to be more work in France to help get the gas to where it's really needed.

In the meantime, said Enagas spokesman Claudio Rodriguez, the company that runs Spain's natural gas network, the nation's LNG terminals could be used to send along ships of LNG to other European ports to "reinforce Europe's gas and energy systems."

Experts agree, however, that if Europe wants energy autonomy, it must strengthen its connections.

"Spain is part of the solution, but, unfortunately, it is limited in what it can do," said Gonzalo Escribano, energy and climate analyst of Spain's Elcano Institute think tank.

"For years, Spain has been issuing warnings to other member states on their dependence on Russia ... (now) we want to turn off the Russian tap, and, dear sirs, we can't."

Fed's rate hikes threaten its goal of narrowing racial gaps

By Christopher Rugaber
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America's hiring boom of the past year has narrowed racial disparities in unemployment. Yet the Federal Reserve's ongoing interest rate hikes — shaping up to be the steepest in 15 years — threaten to reverse that progress.

The hikes will mean higher borrowing rates that could hobble the job market and undercut a goal the Fed unveiled two years ago: To keep rates ultralow for as long as possible, to help less advantaged workers, who often don't benefit much from job growth until late in an economic expansion.

Now, though, facing the worst inflation in four decades, the Fed has begun tightening credit and is expected to keep raising its benchmark short-term rate multiple times this year and next. Such rapid hikes typically slow borrowing and spending and can raise unemployment and even cause a recession. During such downturns, Black and Hispanic Americans commonly suffer higher jobless rates.

The Fed's shift away from low rates comes as the African American unemployment rate has reached 6.8%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics on Friday, down sharply from its pandemic high of nearly 17% and a relatively low level historically. Yet it remains nearly twice the 3.6% rate for whites. Hispanic unemployment is 4.9%.

"The reason why this matters in the Black community is because we are literally the last hired, and it's only when you get to this point in a recovery where black workers really see their gains," said William Spriggs, chief economist at the AFL-CIO. "When you slow the pace of hiring, then you cut off that path."



Fed Chair Jerome Powell in March before a House panel. **TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL**

In August 2020, the Fed redefined its goal of maximum employment as being "broad-based and inclusive."

For the first time, it would look beyond the overall unemployment rate and also consider jobless rates for Black and Hispanic workers in setting interest rates. Fed officials hoped that by keeping rates down, they could help narrow the nation's persistent racial unemployment gaps.

The policy represented "a significant shift," said Stephanie Aaronson, director of economic studies at the Brookings Institution and a former Fed economist. "Prior to that, every Fed chair would have said something along the lines of, a rising tide lifts all boats. Now they were saying, a rising tide lifts all boats — but not to the same level, and not at the same pace."

For Chair Jerome Powell and other Fed officials, the goal was to keep the economy running "hot" to reduce unemployment. The Fed also wanted to raise too-low inflation, which had stayed stubbornly below its 2% annual target for roughly a decade.

In a so-called hot economy, businesses become so desperate for workers that they hire applicants they would otherwise have neglected. They are more likely, for example, to hire and train workers who lack certain skills or even people who have completed prison sentences.

But the pandemic has upended the Fed's intentions. The combination of supply-chain snarls and robust consumer demand, fueled by government rescue aid and the Fed's own low rates, fed an unexpectedly large and persistent spike in inflation.

The result is that the central bank must raise rates to fight inflation.

The seeds of the Fed's shift toward pursuing a more inclusive recovery were sown during the economic expansion that followed the 2008-2009 Great Recession, the longest in U.S. history. The Fed pinned its key rate at nearly zero in December 2008, where it remained for seven years.

Over time, its policies helped shrink unemployment to its lowest point in a half-century. Black and Hispanic jobless rates reached record lows.

Black unemployment fell to 5.4% in 2019, the lowest on records dating to 1972. It was just 1.9 percentage points above the white rate of 3.5%, the smallest such gap on record.

Other racial gaps vanished altogether.

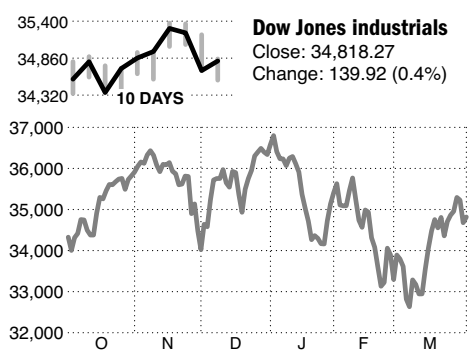
The proportions of Black and white Americans who were working or seeking work equaled each other in 2019, for example, after roughly four decades in which Black workers had trailed whites.

Still, the reality that racial unemployment gaps exist even during hot economies has fueled a perception among economists that there are limits to what the Fed's low rates — and a strong economy — can achieve.

MARKET RUNDOWN

Saturday, April 2, 2022

DOW 34,818.27 +139.92 ▲
10-YR T-BOND 2.38% +.05 ▲
GOLD $1,919.10 -30.10 ▼



Domestic Indexes

	CLOSE	CHG.	YTD
DOW Indus.	34,818.27	+139.92	-4.18%
DOW Trans.	15,511.30	-771.72	-5.87%
DOW Util.	1,057.27	+15.31	+7.80%
NYSE Comp.	16,787.75	+116.84	-2.19%
Nasdaq Comp.	14,261.50	+40.98	-8.84%
S&P 500	4,545.86	+15.45	-4.62%
S&P 400	2,710.15	+16.49	-4.64%
Wilshire 5000	45,803.72	+197.04	-5.48%
Russell 2000	2,091.11	+20.98	-6.87%

Commodities

FUELS	CLOSE	PREV.	YTD
Crude Oil (bbl)	99.27	100.28	+31.99%
Natural Gas (mm btu)	5.72	5.64	+53.35%
Unleaded Gas (gal)	3.15	3.19	+41.52%
METALS	**CLOSE**	**PREV.**	**YTD**
Gold (oz)	1,919.10	1,949.20	+5.01%
Silver (oz)	24.64	25.12	+5.63%

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Foreign Exchange

	ForEx in U.S. $	U.S. $ in ForEx
Britain	1.3107	.7629
Canada	.7993	1.2511
China	.1572	6.3631
Euro	1.1039	.9059
Japan	.008155	122.62
Mexico	.050332	19.8679

Money Rates

	CLOSE	PREV. WK.
Prime rate	3.50	3.50
3-mo. T-Bill	0.53	0.54
6-mo. T-Bill	1.07	1.00
5-yr T-Note	2.56	2.55
10-yr T-Note	2.38	2.49
30-yr T-Bond	2.42	2.60

Global Markets

	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	%YTD
Frankfurt	14,446.48	+31.73	+.22%	-9.06%
London	7,537.90	+22.22	+.30%	+2.08%
Hong Kong	22,039.55	+42.70	+.19%	-5.80%
Nikkei	27,665.98	-155.45	-.56%	-3.91%

Stocks of Local Interest

STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	YTD %CHG
AMC Entertainment A (AMC)	23.30	-1.34	-14.3
AT&T Inc (T)	23.98	+.35	-2.5
Adv Micro Dev (AMD)	108.19	-1.15	-24.8
American Airlines Gp (AAL)	18.24	-.01	+1.6
Amphenol Corp (APH)	75.57	+.22	-13.6
Annaly Capital Mgmt (NLY)	7.06	+.02	-9.7
Apple Inc (AAPL)	174.31	-.30	-1.8
Avangrid Inc (AGR)	47.49	+.75	-4.8
Bank of America (BAC)	40.90	-.32	-8.1
Barnes Group (B)	40.16	-.03	-13.8
BitNile Holdings Inc (NILE)	.77	-.07	-35.4
Booking Holdings (BKNG)	2367.83	+19.38	-1.3
Borqs Technologies (BRQS)	.21	-.01	-43.5
Brist Myr Sqb (BMY)	73.82	+.79	+18.4
CVS Health Corp (CVS)	101.09	-.12	-2.0
Carnival Corp (CCL)	20.05	-.17	-.3
Carrier Global Corp (CARR)	46.04	+.17	-15.1
Charter Communic (CHTR)	561.68	+16.16	-13.8
Cigna Corp (CI)	246.25	+6.64	+7.2
Citigroup (C)	52.33	-1.07	-13.3
Clovis Oncology Inc (CLVS)	2.50	+.48	-7.7
Comcast Corp A (CMCSA)	47.70	+.88	-5.2
DiDi Global Inc (DIDI)	2.82	+.32	-43.4
Disney (DIS)	137.00	-.16	-11.6
EMCOR Group Inc (EME)	113.86	+1.23	-10.6
Ethan Allen (ETD)	25.67	-.40	-2.4
Eversource Energy (ES)	89.84	+1.65	-1.3
Exela Technologies (XELA)	.43	+.01	-51.4
Ford Motor (F)	16.65	-.26	-19.8
FuelCell Energy (FCEL)	5.74	-.02	+10.4
Gen Dynamics (GD)	242.51	+1.33	+16.3
Gen Electric (GE)	92.49	+.99	-2.1
Guardforce AI Co Ltd (GFAI)	1.73	+.19	+60.2
Hartford Fn Sv (HIG)	72.54	+.73	+5.1
Honeywell Intl (HON)	196.03	+1.45	-6.0
Horizon Tech Fin (HRZN)	13.98	+.08	-12.2
Hycroft Mining Holdg (HYMC)	2.16	-.14	+251.8
IQIYI Inc (IQ)	4.78	+.24	+4.8
Imperial Petroleum (IMPP)	1.32	-.13	-38.3
Infosys Ltd (INFY)	24.61	-.28	-2.8
Intel Corp (INTC)	48.11	-1.45	-6.6
Kaman (KAMN)	43.25	-.23	+.2
Keycorp (KEY)	21.66	-.72	-6.4
Kosmos Energy Ltd (KOS)	7.91	+.72	+128.6
Lincoln Natl Corp (LNC)	65.67	+.31	-3.8
Longeveron Inc (LGVN)	15.61	+1.81	+29.3
MGM Resorts Intl (MGM)	41.87	-.07	-6.7
Matador Resources (MTDR)	55.76	+2.78	+51.0
MetLife Inc (MET)	70.50	+.22	+12.8
Micron Tech (MU)	76.18	-1.71	-18.2
Microsoft Corp (MSFT)	309.42	+1.11	-8.0
Mullen Automotive (MULN)	2.87	-.11	-45.1
Novartis AG (NVS)	87.69	-.06	+.3
Nvidia Corporation (NVDA)	267.12	-5.74	-9.2
Otis Worldwide Corp (OTIS)	76.28	-.67	-12.4
Peoples Utd Fncl (PBCT)	19.41	-.58	+8.9
Pfizer Inc (PFE)	51.57	-.20	-12.7
Pinduoduo Inc ADS (PDD)	42.65	+2.54	-26.8
Pitney Bowes (PBI)	5.18	-.02	-21.9
Prudential Fncl (PRU)	118.40	+.23	+9.4
Pub Svc Ent Gp (PEG)	71.06	+1.06	+6.5
Raytheon Technolog (RTX)	100.17	+1.10	+16.4
Rogers Corp (ROG)	272.80	+1.10	-.1
SS&C Technlogies (SSNC)	75.13	+.11	-8.4
Snap Inc A (SNAP)	37.39	+1.40	-20.5
SoFi Technologies (SOFI)	9.33	-.12	-41.0
Sthwstn Energy (SWN)	7.35	+.18	+57.7
Stanley Black & Deck (SWK)	140.90	+1.11	-25.3
Starwood Prop Trust (STWD)	24.57	+.40	+1.1
Sundial Growers Inc (SNDL)	.70	...	+21.1
Takung Art Co (TKAT)	3.64	+1.39	-10.1
Tellurian Inc (TELL)	6.34	+1.04	+105.8
Terex Corp (TEX)	35.33	-.33	-19.6
Tilray Brands Inc (TLRY)	7.48	-.29	+6.4
Tonix Pharma (TNXP)	.22	-.01	-39.1
Travelers Cos (TRV)	185.25	+2.52	+18.4
United Rentals (URI)	354.00	-1.21	+6.5
UnitedHealth Group (UNH)	512.59	+2.62	+2.1
Verizon Comm (VZ)	52.12	+1.18	+.3
Virtus Invest (VRTS)	239.73	-.26	-19.3
Voya Financial (VOYA)	66.66	+.31	+.5
Webster Financial (WBS)	55.66	-.46	-.3
Wells Fargo & Co (WFC)	48.71	+.25	+1.5
White Mtns Insur (WTM)	1145.62	+9.38	+13.0
World Wrestling Ent (WWE)	62.41	-.03	+26.5
XPO Logistics Inc (XPO)	69.91	-2.89	-9.7
Xerox Holdings Corp (XRX)	19.97	-.20	-11.8

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OPINION

OP-ED

Local leaders work with senators on aid

By Joe DeLong

One of the many things Connecticut has going for it is that it's a small state, though 3.6 million strong. Our big cities and small towns exist in the same mindset — compare that to a state like California where Los Angeles and San Francisco are a six-hour drive apart. For them, I'm sure that can feel like a world away. Coincidentally, Hartford is just about six hours away from Washington D.C., which for towns and cities can feel just as distant. Thanks to the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, or CCM, was able to arrange the first CCM-member municipal meeting with our senators in the U.S. Capitol in two years. The primary topic was keeping our towns and cities healthy and growing.

Led by Luke Bronin, mayor of Hartford and current CCM president, municipal officials representing Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven, and members of CCM's staff, sat with U.S. Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Christopher Murphy to discuss important issues.

This is what we advocated for:

First, we urged them to consider local uses of infrastructure funds. While we are advocates for improvements to our larger infrastructure network, especially rail, we cannot afford to disregard the integrity of our local infrastructure. We told the senators that we need meaningful funding for workforce programs to leverage municipal projects financed by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and American Rescue Plan Act. or ARPA. Currently, many programs that were authorized in the infrastructure bill are constrained without dedicated funding.

On ARPA, we asked them to oppose efforts to rescind unallocated or unused funds, and to support measures that would expand the uses for those funds. CCM fought, alongside partners like NLC, for more direct funding for towns and cities. Municipalities across Connecticut are relying on these funds to recover from the pandemic and implement new programs — all with the flexibility to decide what is best for residents. In particular, we reiterated our appreciation to the senators for their efforts in securing an additional $690 million that Connecticut would have otherwise lost because we do not have county government.



Joe DeLong is the executive director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. **COURANT FILE PHOTO**

When preparing a toolkit for the ARPA funds, CCM asked our 168 members how they planned to use the funds. The answers were not all that surprising. Working within the well-defined qualified uses laid out by the U.S. Treasury, over 60% of towns said that money was going to the public health response, responding to the economic harm, and offsetting internal revenue loss. Some 40% of towns are looking to work on regional projects. We told our senators that rescinding those funds would only hurt innovative ideas and cooperation among towns. We hope that they could be added to the Build Back Better act, which would stimulate workforce advancement, housing and create better water infrastructure for our state.

Both of our senators have sent strong messages on their stance toward gun violence, and we asked them to be allies in efforts to help reduce violence in our municipalities. We talked about Project Longevity, which has been a successful program that brings local, state and federal law enforcement together with community members with a focus on the next wave in community policing. Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport have utilized the program to build strong ties between the community, police and social service providers. Project Longevity's message is that everyone is a valued member of the community and violence only hurts us all.

To encompass all that we covered in that meeting would be difficult, but the senators and their aides were taking good notes. I'd like to commend Mayor Bronin, Aidee Nieves, chair of the Bridgeport City Council, and Rosa Santana, president pro tem of the New Haven Board of Alders, for their work on behalf of not just their cities, but every town and city in Connecticut. I'd like to thank Sens. Blumenthal and Murphy for their advocacy.

CCM prides itself on working to improve the everyday life of every resident of this great state. Our partners in the federal government are integral to that work, and for a few hours in March, Washington D.C. didn't feel so far away.

Joe DeLong is executive director and CEO of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The state of Connecticut lost a treasure

Bob Child captured Connecticut's history for more than four decades during his distinguished career as a photojournalist. His brilliance lay in finding a moment, often in the midst of chaos, that embodied the spirit of the event.

My personal favorite is a photo is one he took in 1994 during a public hearing on legislation to ban assault weapons. His photo shows my daughter Leyna, who was six months old, sitting on my lap and listening intently to the debate. Decades later, I still look at the picture and am transported back to that moment.

Thank you, Bob, for your service to our state and country.

Susan Bysiewicz, lieutenant governor of Connecticut

So much admiration for Zelenskyy

It's amazing how the geopolitical landscape has recently changed so dramatically. A few years ago, an American president kowtowed to Vladimir Putin and became the laughingstock of the entire civilized world.

Today in Ukraine, a former comedian has stood up to the Russian dictator to become the most respected president throughout the free world. May the future hold many more standing ovations for Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the courageous Ukrainian people.

Gregory W. Jahne, New Hartford

If China aids Russia, hit both with more sanctions

If Russia ever hopes to undo the increasing sanctions we should be placing on it, we must insist that, of every dollar it receives when this is over, half first goes to families of those killed and injured and to rebuilding the damage done by invading Ukraine.

If China helps the Russians, Americans should unite in a massive campaign to refuse to buy anything made in China. We should proactively seek to import goods from countries who stand for freedom and democracy. Nobody guilty of the atrocities we are witnessing deserves a penny of our money.

Jesse Samuels, West Hartford

Let Putin take care of Ukrainian refugees

What would happen if all the people forced to leave Ukraine marched into Russia and had that government take care of them? Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine, so let him take care of the people whose lives he is trying to destroy.

The men in Ukraine would stay to fight and what would happen to their families if they went to Russia? Nothing. Russia would have to take care of them. There would be upheaval. Once the refugees were in Russia the unbelievers would see what Russia has done to Ukraine. Putin would not have much of a chance of staying in power. Sounds crazy I know, but what is going on between Russia and Ukraine is crazy.

Jill Price, Newington

Murphy wrong to seek more aid for Ukraine

Sen. Chris Murphy is urging more military aid to Ukraine [Page 1, March 19, "Murphy says he'll make push for more aid to Ukraine"]. No, absolutely not. We cannot have victory in Ukraine, Vladimir Putin will stop at nothing, including using nuclear weapons. Do you want WWIII? The Ukrainians are doing a good job of making it difficult for Russian invaders. Putin is going to realize that the cost and the fact that he conquered a decimated country wasn't worth it.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has diplomatic cards he can play, promising not to join NATO or the European Union, but he would rather have us enforce a no-fly zone, risking all-out war. It wouldn't be the first time an impassioned plea from a charismatic leader would result in thousands of deaths. World wars have been started by big powers jumping into smaller wars and dragging the whole world into it. These chest-thumping patriots are willing to send somebody else's young people off to be killed.

Sen. Murphy wasn't around for WWII, but I remember it and all the anguish over losing family members and friends. Ukrainians are doing an admirable job with the current level of military aid. We are in this enough, don't escalate it.

Dick Emmons, West Hartford

Courant e-special ignores women's basketball

Perhaps the Courant has not heard that March Madness now applies equally to men's and women's teams. Your unbalanced e-special on March Madness is an insult to the hardworking, dedicated young women who so consistently represent Connecticut. At a minimum, their bracket could have been covered. Wake up, Courant. Women have equal rights now.

Jean Anderson, Colchester

There are better options than abortion

I do not want murder in my state's constitution. Abortion is murder. Roe v. Wade legalized abortion and millions of unborn babies have been aborted. We are better than this. Connecticut has over 20 crisis pregnancy centers, which provide caring and practical support. Only a mother can give the gift of life and if she's not willing or able to parent, she can place her baby for adoption. She can choose the parents and plan for her involvement as her child grows.

Men and women have been victimized by the moneymaking abortion industry. Planned Parenthood is our country's biggest abortion provider. As an unexpected child to my mother, I am grateful I was welcomed into my family. There have been unexpected pregnancies in my extended family and I am grateful these children have been blessed to live. Why accept one human determining whether another human gets to live?

Theresa M. Parla, Manchester

OP-ED

Biden's budget reflects the challenges Democrats face

By E.J. Dionne Jr.
The Washington Post

It can't be said that the $5.8 trillion spending plan that President Joe Biden announced Monday was ignored, since leaders of both parties issued the mix of praise and censure you'd expect. But it's receiving less attention than it deserves.

Biden's budget reflects the intricacy of the coalition he leads, the challenges his party faces and the radical changes in the national and international landscape over just a few months.

Budgets rarely decide elections, and this one certainly won't. If Democrats beat the odds and maintain their House and Senate majorities, it will be because of a backlash against the forces of right-wing radicalism in the Republican Party and improvements in the public mood about the economy and the course of the pandemic.

But to have even a shot at pulling off an upset in November, the party needs to solve two very different problems.

It needs to win back moderates who supported Biden in 2020 but have swung away since. A president elected with just over 51% of the vote now has approval ratings hovering between 40% and 45%.

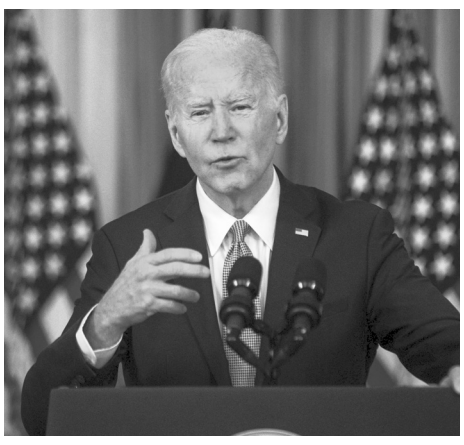
At the same time, Democrats must turn out their core supporters dispirited by Congress's failure to pass voting rights bills and Biden's Build Back Better proposals. An indicator of where enthusiasm lies: An Economist/YouGov poll from recent days found that while 38% of Americans strongly disapprove of Biden's job performance, only 18% strongly approve.

Biden knows he needs to shore up support at both ends of the alliance that elected him, and these dual imperatives were obvious in his budget. Many have described it as a move to the center, and in important ways it is. Yet it also includes both spending proposals and tax increases on the wealthy that progressives will welcome.

The shift to the middle includes his commitment to $1 trillion in deficit reduction. Biden asked Congress for more than $30 billion to fight crime, inoculating Democrats against efforts to associate the party with calls to "defund the police." He pushed defense spending up 10 percent, to more than $800 billion, pointing to an urgency created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And he put money behind his "unity agenda," proposing new investments to combat the opioid crisis, find cures for cancer and improve care for veterans and for mental health.

But progressives were not left out. Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Ky., who chairs the House Budget Committee, noted in an interview that the budget also "generously funds Democratic priorities that have been neglected for a long time, including education, child care, health care, including veterans' health care, and pay increases for military and civilian government employees."

Biden also made an implicit promise to keep fighting for elements of his Build Back Better proposal by remaining vague about the particulars. If being highly specific last year failed to push his plan through, Biden is now prepared to leave the details to Congress and declare victory on whatever he can get.



President Joe Biden speaks about the March 2022 jobs report at the White House on Friday. **ROBERTO SCHMIDT/GETTY-AFP**

His emphasis on reducing the deficit was clearly a form of outreach to Sen. Joe Manchin III, D-W.Va., who has signaled that he would support parts of Build Back Better this year, including perhaps $500 billion in spending to combat climate change — as long as some steps are taken to contain future red ink.

Even if its chances of passing are limited, his proposal to tax the very wealthy on the basis of unrealized gains from their investments could be Biden's most innovative idea — and one likely to create a helpful contrast with Republicans this fall.

Jason Furman, who chaired the White House Council of Economic Advisers under President Barack Obama, noted in the Wall Street Journal this week that Biden's plan "could solve many of the problems that have bedeviled earlier approaches to taxing the income from wealth."

Noting the recent suggestion from Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., the head of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, to raise taxes on the half of Americans with the lowest incomes, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., was almost gleeful in responding to Biden's proposal.

On the Senate floor Monday, Schumer contrasted Biden's efforts to have "the ultra-rich chip in to growing our country" with Scott "openly calling [for] raising taxes on half of Americans."

Biden's budget is no cure-all for what ails Democrats. Many progressives are unhappy with the proposed defense increases even as Republicans continue to attack Biden's domestic spending (while simultaneously insisting on more for the military).

But on page after page, as Yarmuth said, Biden's plan closely matches today's headlines. It acknowledges the hurdles Biden and his party face. It can be read as the first draft of a strategy to get past them.

E.J. Dionne writes for The Washington Post.

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1 BUY VINTAGE ELECTRONICS OLD TOYS, MILITARY JEWELRY, ADVERTISING WATCHES, MUSCIAL INSTRUMENTS, CAMERAS, WATCHES, SIGNS, ART, SPORTS MEMORABILIA, OLD STUFF, ANTIQUES, GUITARS, AMPS, TUBE HI-FI, RECEIVERS, AUDIO EQ, RADIOS, HAM, CB, SAXOPHONES & MANY OTHER OLD ITEMS! CALL 860-707-9350

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Buying Bottles, Crocks, Jugs, Toys, Silver Plated Items, Costume Jewelry, Pottery, Typewriters, Sewing Machines, Knives, Fishing, Tools, Lanterns, Glass, Clocks, Books & More 860-874-8396

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courant.com/advertiser
860-525-2525



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Tonka, Matchbox, Hotwheels, Trains, LEGOs, Star Wars, GI Joes, Nintendo, Action Figures, Slot Cars, Models, Games, Atari, Western, Dolls, Robots, Windups, & more. 860-874-8396



BUYING PRE1980 Toys, Model Kits, Comic Bks, Baseball Card Posters & Cards, Pennants, Political, Postcards, Beer, Bar, Soda, Oil & Gas Station Cans&Signs, License Plates, Jewelry, Masonic & Fraternal Items, Zippos, I check Bsmnt/Attic. 860-817-4350

Announcements

Lost/Found

FARMINGTON IMPOUND #48 - Male, Brindle, Pitbull. Call Farmington Animal Control 860-675-2440

Auto & SUV's

NISSAN ALTIMA 2019
$24500 All Wheel Drive, Many Options, Like New Condition 16,000 miles 860-605-6895

PONTIAC GRAND PRIX 2002 - $1350 OBO. GT. Runs, engine light on, new parts. Call: 860-623-9570

VOLVO S70 2000 - $5000 136,450 mi Well Maintd, Lthr Seats Bosch Sound, Exc Cond 860-978-0183

Antiques/ Classics



FORD MODEL A 1929 - $19500 4 dr, blind back, older restoration, rebuilt engine, L&B interior, runs & drives excellent! 860-828-7600

MERCEDES-BENZ 300SL 1991
$17000 Excellent condition classic convertible with hard top. Always garaged. 802-436-2962

PORSCHE 914 1974 - $2200 Solid Rolling Chassis Call No Txt 860-209-6629

Auto / Truck Wanted

CASH PAID
for any Toyota, other makes. Any condition. Running or not, crashed okay. Will take other makes and models. 203-600-4431

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*Merchandise Ads Restrictions Apply

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CTShopsHere Buy. Sell. Save.

*Merchandise Ads Restrictions Apply

PUBLIC NOTICES

Hartford

Westbrook CT Minority Opportunity – Silktown Roofing is currently soliciting SBE/MBE/DBE subcontractors for Public Notice; Westbrook CT- Westbrook Town Hall & Library. Trades; Portable Restrooms. Our bid submits on Thursday, April 7, 2022. If additional time is needed for your submission please call our estimating department. Interested parties are asked to contact us at subcontracting@silktownroofing.com. An Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Employer.
4/2/22 7182611

Request for Qualified Contractors
2022 Home Energy Solutions SM Program
Energy Efficiency Programs in Connecticut

Eversource Energy Service Company ("Eversource"), United Illuminating ("UI"), Connecticut Natural Gas ("CNG"), and Southern Connecticut Gas ("SCG") subsidiaries of AVANGRID, Inc., are investor-owned utilities (collectively referred to as "the Companies") in Connecticut. The Companies, as advised by The Connecticut Energy Efficiency Board, are responsible for the implementation of cost-effective electric and natural gas weatherization and energy efficiency programs on behalf of the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund ("The Fund") delivered through the Energize Connecticut Initiative. As administrators of the Fund, the Companies are soliciting qualified contractors to participate in a Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") for the 2022 Home Energy Solutions program, the Companies' flagship residential energy efficiency program. The RFQ will be released on or around April 25, 2022.
Home Energy Solutions is a residential energy efficiency program that focuses on providing cost-effective in-home services and incentives that allow Connecticut's households to save energy and money without sacrificing comfort. The contractors play a vital role in the success of the Home Energy Solutions program and are expected to follow all prescribed guidelines to maximize the residential customer's energy savings. Selected contractors will be required to engage Connecticut's residential customers using established protocols to assess and directly install these energy efficient services and products. There are twenty-eight Home Energy Solutions vendors participating in 2022. Any vendor that has a current contract with the Companies to provide HES services does not have to participate in this RFQ process and will continue to be eligible to operate in the program as long as minimum program requirements are satisfied.
The certifications and requirements that are necessary to be considered a qualified contractor, with qualified technicians, for purposes of the RFQ, include, but may not be limited to, certifications from the Building Performance Institute for "Building Analyst" and "Envelope Professional", the Environmental Protection Agency's certification for "Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting", the U.S. Department of Energy's Home Energy Score Assessor, Home Improvement Salesperson license and the contractor must have a valid Connecticut Home Improvement Contractor license. In addition, selected contractors will be required to have minimum experience levels and meet the Companies' contractual Terms and Conditions.

TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RFQ PROCESS, THE QUALIFIED CONTRACTOR MUST RESPOND TO THIS NOTICE BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO THE EMAIL LISTED BELOW BY April 15, 2022 AT 5:00 PM WIT "HES CONTRACTOR RFQ" IN THE SUBJECT LINE. Please provide the Company name, address, phone number, primary contact name information with a valid email address. The RFQ process will be internet- based and your notification will be through the valid email address that is provided.
E-mail: eeprocurement@eversource.com

Energize Connecticut is an initiative of the Energy Efficiency Fund, the Connecticut Green Bank, the State, and your local Electric and Gas Utilities, with funding from a charge on customer energy bills
3/31, 4/1, 4/2 4/3 & 4/4/22 7168073

Request for Proposal (RFP)
Small Business Energy Advantage

Eversource Energy Service Company ("Eversource") and United Illuminating ("UI"), Connecticut Natural Gas ("CNG"), and Southern Connecticut Gas ("SCG") subsidiaries of AVANGRID, Inc., referred to as the Companies, as administrators of the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund, are soliciting proposals from qualified contractors to install energy-efficient equipment measures for existing small business customers through the Small Business Energy Advantage Program (SBEA).

Interested contractors should submit your intent to bid to SBEACT@eversource.com and include your company name, primary contact name, phone number and email no later than Friday, April 8, 2022 after reviewing the program details below. Bid invitations will be coordinated through the Eversource Procurement Department. Interested contractors will need to register in Eversource's sourcing platform, ARIBA, in order to participate in the RFP. Instructions will be provided once you indicate your intent to bid.

Awarded contractors will be required to submit self-generated, qualified leads. They must conduct customer site assessments to evaluate the electrical, natural gas, oil and propane saving opportunities. Contractors shall have the ability to provide detail and coordinate installation for all potential Energy efficiency measures including, but not limited to, weatherization improvements, high-efficiency lighting with controls, advanced thermostats, refrigeration equipment with controls, variable frequency drives for operating equipment, HVAC equipment upgrades and energy management systems. They must also be capable to engage with a customized, internet based system provide by the Companies following training provided to all awarded contractors.

Those contractors submitting a bid will be evaluated on their ability to support the program through a dedicated sales staff plus an in-house team, audit and build projects. In addition, contractors will be asked to submit examples of previous energy efficiency comprehensive projects.

The Companies offer customer incentives for qualified energy-efficient installation services to offset a portion of the project costs. Zero percent, on bill financing is also available for those customers who qualify. Not all utility customers qualify, and these offerings are limited to small businesses as defined by each utility within their program implementation manual.

A bidders conference call will be held on April 8, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. to answer any questions prospective or current program contractors may have. The conference call will be open to qualified contractors willing to operate in Eversource and Avangrid/UI CT service territories.
Energize Connecticut(SM) – Programs funded by a charge on customer energy bills.
3/31, 4/1, 4/2 4/3 & 4/4/22 7167993

Notice of Application

This is to give notice that I,
LYNDA M NORRIS
55 ASH ST
DOVER, NH 03820-3023
Have filed an application to add live entertainent
with the Department of Consumer Protection for my existing CAFE LIQUOR permit

located at:
300B W MAIN ST
AVON CT 06001-3639
The business is owned by: TRI-IT GROUP LLC

Live Entertainment Added: Acoustics (not amplified), Disc Jockeys, Karaoke

LYNDA M NORRIS
3/26 & 4/2/22 7177321

Connecticut

The Capital Region Development Authority ("CRDA"), a quasi-public agency of the state of Connecticut, is seeking a qualified consultant to provide project coordination services in the Parkville neighborhood. Please use the following link to access the RFP: https://crdact.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/3-22-2022-RFP-ParkvilleDevelopmentCoordinationServices.pdf.
3/26 - 4/25/2022 7177253

NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF DECISION

At its Regular Meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission met and took the following actions:

Approved
Petition #10-22: Special Permit (Sec. 6.2.5) for a freestanding sign at 3333 Berlin Turnpike, Applicant: HJG-PC Newington Investor, LLC, Owner: The Rocky River Realty Co., Contact: Jamie Anderson.

Petition #11-22: Special Permit (Sec. 6.2.5) for a freestanding sign at 3333 Berlin Turnpike, Applicant: HJG-PC Newington Investor, LLC, Owner: The Rocky River Realty Co., Contact: Jamie Anderson.

Submitted,
Renata Bertotti, AICP
Town Planner
4/2/2022 7183419

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE: The following self-storage unit contents containing household and other goods will be sold for cash by CubeSmart, 1501 Route 12 Gales Ferry CT 06335 to satisfy a lien on April 14 2022 at approx. 1:30 PM at www.storagetreasures.com:
Cube- 1375- Juan Hernandez
Cube- 2280- Janet Kerttula
Cube-2442- Tammy Hoffa-Strother
Run Dates:
3/31/2022
4/01/2022
4/1, 4/2/2022 7182676

Extra Space Storage will hold a public auction to sell personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated: 184 Fenn Rd Newington CT 06111, 860-667-1395, April 13th 2022 12:30 PM.
Jeannette Mcallister Unit 100 3 bedrooms; Attic; basement; 100 boxes; furniture; household items, Kimberly Solek Unit 173 Furniture, Robert Ricketts Unit 491 Household items, Alexis Nurse Unit 521 furniture clothing, Maryann McCallop Unit 580 couch, dresser, boxes bags. The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storagetreasures.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.
4/2, 4/9/2022 7182962

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT SERENDIPITOUS HOLDINGS, LLC, a Connecticut limited liability company having its principal place of business in East Haddam, Connecticut, is dissolved by resolution of its members as of March 31, 2022. A Certificate of Dissolution has been filed with the Secretary of State of Connecticut as required by law.
All creditors are warned to present their claims to: Nicholas Paindiris, Esq., of BROWN PAINDIRIS & SCOTT, LLP, 2252 Main street, Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033, within 120 days of publication. Any claim will be barred if a proceeding to enforce the claim is not timely brought after publication of this notice within three years.
Dated at Glastonbury, Connecticut, this 31st day of March, 2022.
By BROWN PAINDIRIS & SCOTT, LLP
Its Attorneys
4/2/2022 7183497

INVITATION TO BID/LEGAL NOTICE
SMALL CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The Town of Vernon requests proposals from qualified firms or individuals for professional and technical services required to prepare a 2022 Small Cities Community Development Program Application and provide administrative and technical support to implement activities consistent with all State/Federal regulatory compliance, including program income during the contract period, if approved. This RFP also includes selection for other Federal/State funding programs such as STEAP, Section 108, USDA that may be used to meet local community development and housing needs.

The selected contractor will be responsible for all phases of general program administration and compliance, under the Town's direct supervision for approved projects with all State/Federal agencies. Excluding funds disbursement, which will include such specific project administrative activities as Section 3, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Davis-Bacon compliance, housing rehabilitation design and delivery if required.

All Application development and submission and resident participation activities necessary for the specific project submission must be included in the proposal. Selection will be based on amount of Small Cities projects completed, experience of staff assigned, cost, and any other factors deemed of benefit to the community. Specific architectural and engineering services required for project activities are not being requested as part of this proposal.

Two (2) copies of the proposal should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "BID DOCUMENT – DO NOT OPEN – CDBG BLOCK GRANT" clearly marked on the outside of the envelope to: Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator, Town of Vernon, Memorial Building, 14 Park Place, 3rd Floor Vernon, CT 06066 no later than 10:00 AM on Monday, April 18, 2022. Received bids will be opened and read aloud publicly in person on Monday, April 18, 2022 at 11:00 AM. Emailed, faxed or late bids will not be accepted.

Proposals must include the following information:
a. Proposed scope of work and project approach.
b. Detailed information of the firm's background and experience in Federal/State funding, specific Small Cities CDBG Program experience is required.
c. Key staff assigned with resumes.
d. Proposed fee approach including a list of per diem rates by job category.

Additional information is available by contacting to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator, Town of Vernon, 14 Park Place, Vernon, CT 06066, telephone 860-870-3665, between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, local time, April 4, 2022, through April 13, 2022, or at mpurcaro@vernon-ct.gov.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER
WBE/MBE/SBE AND SECTION 3 BUSINESSES ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY
4/2, 4/5/2022 7182725

West Haven CT Minority Opportunity – Silktown Roofing is currently soliciting SBE/MBE/DBE subcontractors for Public Notice; West Haven CT- 20-230 Surfside Apartments. Trades; carpentry, plumbing, HVAC, electrical, portable restrooms. Material Supply; flat stock metal, lumber. Our bid submits on Thursday, April 7, 2022. If additional time is needed for your submission please call our estimating department. Interested parties are asked to contact us at subcontracting@silktownroofing.com. An Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Employer.
4/2/2022 7183882

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Pets
Adoption • News • Advice • More

Dogs

AKC PUPPIES Info at www.hiddenhillshomestead.org

ANTOLIAN SHEPARD PUPPIES
3 Females, 12 weeks old. call or text (860)550-5461



BERNEDOODLE PUPPIES
Beautiful, Hypoallergenic puppies ready for adoption. Family raised in Huntington MA our puppies have learned to love children! Their personality makes them ideal support pets. Call Melvin Hess at 413-265-6737 for availability. only $2,200.00 - will not last long!



FOX TERRIER PUPPIES $1000, M/F, vet chkd, ready now. 860-942-2651

LABRADOR RETRIEVER AKC yellow Labrador retriever - males and females, 10 weeks, up to date on shots. $1500 Call 860-634-3263

LABRADOR RETRIEVERS AKC, Color white, M & F, Shots, Vet Checked, Dewormed, Happy Healthy Babies 11wks Ready Now $2000 Call For More Info 860-712-5925



MAL-SHI Pups for sale. Hypoallergenic & non shedding. $2000 # 401-527-2491.

MALTESE CHIHUAHUA YORKIE MIX Pups, 8 wks, first shots. $1,000 Firm. 860-604-3552

MINI SCHNAUZERS Puppy's, males, ready for 4/9, vet chked and vac, $1,800, Call 413-596-8190.

YORKSHIRE TERRIER 5lb Parti Mom, 3 lb Traditional Dad, family raised, 2 females available. 5 wks. $1,800. 860-771-9990

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OBITUARIES BY TOWN

Ellington
Lawrence H. Frigon
Enfield
Lawrence H. Frigon
New Britain
Zofia Szewczyk
Other Towns in CT
Linda S. Chase
Linda W. Chase
Eleanor F. West
Plainville
Joan M. Cote
Tolland
Ronni Zoback

*** Denotes name listing only.**
Please note: not all death notices are in alphabetical order.

OBITUARIES

Chase, Linda S. (Smith)



Woodstock – Linda Wishart (Smith) Chase, 81, of Route 169, died Saturday afternoon, March 26, 2022, at home. She was born in Flushing, NY to the late George and Katharine (Hayden) Smith; and was the beloved wife of W. Thomas Chase, whom she wed in 1962 in Bolton, Connecticut at the First Congregational Church.

Linda held a B.A. from Oberlin College (Phi Beta Kappa) and an M.S.L.S. from the Columbia University's School of Library Science. Her career included work in Columbia University's Thomas J. Watson Library, the Library of Congress' Congressional Reference Service, the University of Maryland's McKeldin Library, and the American University Library in Washington, DC from which she retired as Assistant University Librarian in 2003. During her long and accomplished tenure at A.U., Linda supervised the transition from the purchase and cataloging of all print materials to an almost all digital library collection. She coordinated a large library materials budget and was responsible for a cluster of teams comprised of 6 library faculty, 21 full-time staff, and 12 part-time student assistants. Her strong sense of humor and great common sense were cherished by her colleagues. She generously mentored each newly hired librarian and was always there to answer questions and guide them to success.

Linda was an avid reader, enjoyed needlepoint, crossword puzzles, and travel. She was a member of the L'Apres Midi Club, First Congregational Church of Woodstock, a volunteer for the Center for Woodstock History where she acted as the head of exhibitions, and the American Library Association. Among her publications are entries on Currier, Ives, and Wallace Nutting in American National Biography (Oxford, 1998).

For many years Linda was a beloved volunteer at Historic New England's Roseland Cottage, helping wherever help was needed. As a guide, her ability to communicate, her warmth, her thorough knowledge of the house and the Bowen family and her empathy and understanding made her tours extraordinary. She was a dedicated participant in the less serious events at Roseland, demonstrating suffragist parasol defense, portraying an elegant Victorian hostess, personifying perhaps the first Steam Punk librarian, and appearing to hundreds of trick-or-treaters as mustachioed pastry chef.

Linda is survived by her husband of 59 years, Tom Chase; her children, Katharine Chase of Falls Church, VA, Samuel Chase of Fairhaven, MA, and Ellen Chase and her wife Jesse of Grayson, GA; and her four grandchildren, Henry Campbell, Finnleigh Chase, Skylar Chase, and Wesley Chase. She was predeceased by her brother, David Smith and her sister, Marcia Stiehl.

A memorial service is being planned for 1 PM on May 28, at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Gilman Funeral Home & Crematory, 104 Church St., Putnam, CT. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the National Ovarian Cancer Society (https://ovarian.org). For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

West, Eleanor F (Perry)



Eleanor Frances West (Perry) 91, of Groton, passed away at Fairview on Friday April 1, 2022. She was predeceased by her beloved husband of 53 years John M. West. Eleanor was born February 15, 1931 in Hartford, Connecticut to the late Ernest and Isabel (Williams) Perry.

A loving Mother, Grandmother, and Great Grandmother, Eleanor is survived by her four children: her sons John (Michelle) West of Bozrah and Michael West of Ledyard; and her daughters Janet West of Groton and Susan (R. Michael) Byrd of Middletown, RI. She had eight grandchildren whom she loved very much: Justin (Laura), John, & Megan West; Rachael, Nicole, & Michael West; and Michael & Emma Byrd; and her great grandson Jayden West. She is also survived by her two sister-in-laws Claire West of Groton and Maureen Miceli of New London; and numerous nieces and nephews. In addition to being predeceased by her husband and parents, she was also predeceased by her sisters Arline Redmond, Marjorie Featherstone, Dorothy Desmarais, and Virginia Manning; and her infant brother Ernest Perry. Eleanor graduated from Mount St. Joseph Academy in 1949. She worked for Travelers until she was married on November 19, 1960 and then she raised her four children. She was a wonderful wife and mother. She enjoyed crocheting, crosswords, and especially loved spending time with her family and friends. Her family will receive relatives and friends from 4 to 6 p.m. at Byles-Groton Memorial Home, 310 Thames Street, Groton, CT on Tuesday, April 5, 2022. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Sacred Heart Church in Groton at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. Interment will follow in St Mary Cemetery, New London. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Sacred Heart Church, 56 Sacred Heart Dr., Groton, CT 06340.

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries



OBITUARIES

Cote, Joan M



Joan M. Cote, 86, of Plainville, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, March 30, 2022 at Autumn Lake Health Care Center in New Britain after a brief illness. She now joins her beloved husband, the late George Cote, in eternal peace. Born in Milford, ME on June 26, 1935, Joan was the oldest of four children to the late Gilman and Donna (Buchanan) Dunn. Joan married the love of her life, George, in 1952, and moved to Connecticut in 1958, shortly after George was honorably discharged from the US Army to begin their life together. They made Plainville their home for more than 50 years, where they raised their two children. Joan worked in the Plainville school system for many years, and was a friendly and familiar face as a lunchroom monitor at both Wheeler and Linden St. Schools. Additionally, she worked for the Plainville Senior Center, where she coordinated the delivering of Meals on Wheels to area residents. Joan is survived by her son, Bruce Cote; her daughter Donna Solis and her fiancé Jon; and her grandson Christopher Cote; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brothers, William, Michael, and Malcom Dunn and her aunt, Ruth Legassey. Family and friends may gather on Monday, from 5-7 p.m. at Plainville Funeral Home, 81 Broad St, Plainville. Words of remembrance will be shared by family and friends at 7:00 p.m. Guests are invited to honor Joan's favorite color by wearing pink. For online expressions of sympathy, please visit www.PlainvilleFuneralHome.com

PLAINVILLE FUNERAL HOME

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

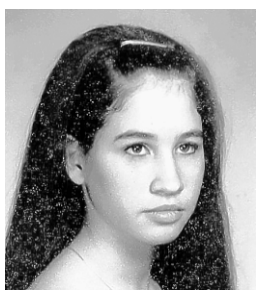
Chase, Linda Wishart (Smith)



Linda Wishart (Smith) Chase, 81, of Route 169, died Saturday afternoon, March 26, 2022, at home. She was born in Flushing, NY to the late George and Katharine (Hayden) Smith; and was the beloved wife of W. Thomas Chase, whom she wed in 1962 in Bolton, Connecticut at the First Congregational Church. Linda held a B.A. from Oberlin College (Phi Beta Kappa) and an M.S.L.S. from Columbia University's School of Library Science. Her career included work in Columbia University's Thomas J. Watson Library, the Library of Congress' Congressional Reference Service, the University of Maryland's McKeldin Library, and the American University Library in Washington, DC from which she retired in 2003. Linda was an avid reader, enjoyed needlepoint, crossword puzzles, and travel. She was a member of the L'Apres Midi Club, First Congregational Church of Woodstock, a volunteer for the Center for Woodstock History where she acted as the head of exhibitions, and the American Library Association. For many years Linda was a beloved volunteer at Roseland Cottage. Among her publications are entries on Currier, Ives, and Wallace Nutting in American National Biography (Oxford, 1998).
Linda is survived by her husband of 59 years, Tom Chase; her children, Katharine Chase of Falls Church, VA, Samuel Chase of Fairhaven, MA, and Ellen Chase and her wife Jesse of Grayson, GA; and her four grandchildren, Henry Campbell, Finnleigh Chase, Skylar Chase, and Wesley Chase. She was predeceased by her brother, David Smith and her sister, Marcia Stiehl.
Memorial service: 1 PM on May 28, at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Gilman Funeral Home & Crematory, 10 Church St., Putnam, CT. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the National Ovarian Cancer Society (https://ovarian.org). For memorial guestbook visit www.GilmanAndValade.com.

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

Zoback, Ronni



Ronni S. Zoback, 68, of Tolland, CT, GramZ, Mom, Sister, Friend, educator, and Mama Zo to all, died on March 30th from a heart that could just love and give no more.
She is predeceased by her one true love and best friend, Mark Zoback.
She leaves behind her children: Scott Zoback and Rachel Wolfberg of Newton, MA; Emily Silverman and Drew Silverman of Boston, MA; and her biggest joy, her grandson Micah Silverman. She also leaves behind brother Allen Spiegel of Pacific Grove, CA; sister-in-law and brother-in-law Michele and Michael Bank; sister-in-law Lynne Rocoff; brother-in-law and sister-in-law Bob Raphael and Vicki Moss; brother- in-law David Raphael. She also leaves behind nieces, nephews, cousins, and an extended "family" that went much deeper.
Ronni was born in Brooklyn, NY on November 26, 1953, the daughter of Charlie and Sally Spiegel. A graduate of Brooklyn College, Ronni never lost her NY accent, and carried a vibrancy and loving touch in every interaction that reverberated across decades and time zones.
She would always have a snack ready for every kid who stopped by her office or house; would make fast friends at gas stations and toll booths; and was a passionate educator for over 40 years.
But her one true love was Mark, and across his years of illness, she was a superhero mother and caretaker; raising two kids, working, and making sure he got world-class care, without missing a step.
Her heart ached and broke for him, and never truly was whole after he passed. She lives on forever in the million pieces of her heart that she shared with thousands of people across her life. The biggest love and thanks to the incredible care teams at Brigham and Women's Hospital for years of compassionate, world-class care of both Ronni and Mark.
In their honor, and in lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to support the HeartPal Program at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Memorial gifts can be made online at www.bwhgiving.org or checks can be made payable to Brigham and Women& Hospital with "in memory of Ronni Zoback" in the memo line and sent to: Brigham and Women's Hospital, Development Office, 116 Huntington Ave., 3rd floor, Boston, MA 02116.
Funeral will be held April 3 at 3:30 pm at Congregation Beth Sholom B'nai Israel in Manchester and will be livestreamed. Burial will follow at Temple B'nai Israel Cemetery in Mansfield at 5pm. Shiva will be observed at Ronni's home in Tolland, CT on Sunday: 7-8, Monday and Tuesday: 5-8; and at her son's home in Newton, MA on Wednesday and Thursday: 5-8. Masks will be optional; please join virtually for services or any evening if you have had any symptoms of sickness or exposures. To view the Funeral Service, and to leave a message of condolence, please visit www.blumensteinfuneralhome.com

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Hartford Courant media group
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IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory Of
ERIC P. HEIGHT



04/02/1984-02/03/2017
Happy birthday Eric. It's been five years since we've seen your sweet smile and happy face. We miss our long talks about history, religion and your passion, archaeology. We were always amazed at your knowledge and ability to communicate it so beautifully. You had such an infectious laugh. You gave us so many wonderful memories of holding you in our arms and just enjoying our lives together, and it is those beautiful memories that keep us going. While nothing can accurately prepare one for the unimaginable pain, intense sorrow, suffocating grief and seemingly never-ending emptiness that engulfs the entire body, soul and spirit when someone you love passes away, at least we can smile knowing you are at peace. Until we meet again in the loving arms of our Lord, please know Eric that we love and miss you so much and our hearts break every day. Happy birthday, Eric. Love, Mom and Dad

In Loving Memory Of
WOODROW W. 'CHUCK ' JOHNSON
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Your Answers MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



1. **WHOM SAY YE THAT I AM?** Their answer: "Some say that Thou are John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets...And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou are the CHRIST (the Messiah), the Son of the LIVING GOD**. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven...From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:13-17,21).
2. **WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST & WHOSE SON IS HE?** Their answer: "The Son of David." His question: "How, then, doth David, in the Spirit, call Him Lord: The LORD said unto My Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool (Psalm 110:1). **IF DAVID, THEN, CALL HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON?**" (Matthew 22:41-46). "And **the Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory **as of the only begotten of the Father,**) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).
3. Pilate asked: **WHAT SHALL I DO THEN WITH JESUS WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST?** Their answer: "They all said unto him, LET HIM BE CRUCIFIED." Matthew 27:20-25
4. **THE RISEN CHRIST ANSWERS:** "Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them, in **all the Scriptures,** the things **concerning Himself**" (Luke 24:25-27).
5. **GOD ONLY CAN SAVE.** Hear and take heart, "that ye may know and believe ME, and understand that I AM HE; before ME there was no GOD formed, neither shall there be after ME. I, even I, am the LORD, and beside ME there is no SAVIOUR" (Isaiah 43:10, 11). "LOOK UNTO ME, and be ye SAVED, all the ends of the earth: for I am GOD, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22). "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing **ye might have life** through His Name" (John 20:31).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the RESURRECTION, and the LIFE: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26). The RESURRECTED LORD JESUS said to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not FAITHLESS, but BELIEVING. And Thomas answered, and said, MY LORD AND MY GOD." John 20:24-29

A very learned man once said to a little girl who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, "My poor little girl, you don't know who you believe in. There have been many Christs, in which of them do you believe?" "I know which one I believe in," replied the child, "I believe in the Christ who is RISEN FROM THE DEAD AS HE SAID!" What would your answer be? Do you have a personal relationship to the living God that surely saves your soul?

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Renewed push for Medicaid expansion

State lawmakers not giving up on initiative that would grant coverage to undocumented children

By Jenna Carlesso and Katy Golvala
CT Mirror

Advocates who had hoped to see another expansion of Medicaid coverage this year for children regardless of their immigration status are now calling for the proposal to be included in the state budget implementer, following a surprising defeat of the bill in committee.

Last year, lawmakers approved an expansion of Medicaid, known as HUSKY in Connecticut, that allowed children 8 and younger, regardless of their immigration status, to qualify for the program beginning on Jan. 1, 2023. Children must come from households earning up to 323% of the federal poverty level to be eligible for coverage.

With the start date imminent, some legislators wanted to widen that age group this year. A bill permitting children 18 and younger, regardless of immigration status, to qualify for HUSKY coverage was raised in the Human Services Committee but failed to advance after members cast a tie vote (10-10) earlier this month.

Supporters now want lawmakers to wrap the initiative into the budget implementer, a measure that puts into effect the provisions of an adopted state budget.

"Every child should have a right to health care coverage. It's a fundamental right," said Jay Sicklick, deputy director of the Center for Children's Advocacy. "From an access issue, why are we drawing the line that this cohort of individuals should not be covered?"

Sicklick noted that the state is already paying for treatment for undocumented children in the form of uncompensated hospital care. Expanding the HUSKY eligibility would allow them better access to preventative and primary care.

"If we're going to exclude a group, they're going to have to get treatment somewhere and somehow, and somebody is going to pay for it, either through an inpatient stay or a shifting around of uncompensated care monies," he said. "So why not embolden the primary and preventative care system to handle these, to reduce the costs on the back end? That's good public health policy, but it's also supported by data and even more significant in a pandemic."

Dr. Julia Rosenberg, an instructor of pediatrics at the Yale School of Medicine, has seen first-hand the difficulties of children accessing care when children aren't covered by health insurance. She described a series of obstacles she faced recently in helping to secure a crucial test for a patient.

"I was trying to make sure that I could get a child a tuberculosis screening they needed, which is important for the person's health as

Turn to Medicaid, Page 3



Orysia Yanovski, 74, of East Haven, and Bradley Woodworth, an associate professor of history at the University of New Haven, join in the singing of the Ukrainian national anthem. **ELIZA FAWCETT/HARTFORD COURANT**

A call for peace

In New Haven, state residents with ties to Ukraine urge aid for refugees of a nation that 'always chose democracy'

By Eliza Fawcett | Hartford Courant

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine dragged into its sixth week, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake, a group of students and scholars assembled on the main quad of the University of New Haven, calling for peace and aid to those fleeing violence.

"It's painful to hear when my friends tell me how loud missiles are when they hit my hometown," Andrii Kryvoruchko, 23, a senior at the University of New Haven, told the crowd of about 75 people who stood encircling the university's crest.

Many onlookers wore the blue and yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag and some held signs, which read "New Haven Stands with Ukraine" and "If Russia Stops Fighting, There Will Be NO WAR."

Kryvoruchko, who is studying criminal justice, was born in Ukraine and lived there through his teenage years. Some of his relatives have now joined the Territorial Defense Forces to defend Ukraine, he said.

While his sister and grandmother managed to flee to Poland, Kryvoruchko said he has no way to bring them to the United States. He called on the United States government to embrace Ukrainians seeking refuge.

"I urge the United States to open the borders for Ukrainians and waive the visa requirements, because many of them have families here and they wish to be reunited," he said. "And they deserve that."

Matthew Schmidt, an associate professor of national security, noted that the University of New Haven has strong ties to Ukraine, including students and faculty who are from the country and many who have studied there.

Turn to Peace, Page 2

Seafood industry bracing for loss

Sanctions on Russia likely to impact jobs, fish supply worldwide

By Patrick Whittle
Associated Press

The worldwide seafood industry is steeling itself for price hikes, supply disruptions and potential job losses as new rounds of economic sanctions on Russia make key species such as cod and crab harder to come by.

The latest round of U.S. attempts to punish Russia for the invasion of Ukraine includes bans on imports of seafood, alcohol and diamonds.

The U.S. is also stripping "most favored nation status" from Russia. Nations around the world are taking similar steps.

Russia is one of the largest producers of seafood in the world and was the fifth-largest producer of wild-caught fish, according to a 2020 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Russia is not one of the biggest exporters of seafood to the U.S., but it's a world leader in exports of cod (the preference for fish and chips in the U.S.). It's also a major supplier of crabs and Alaska pollock, widely used in fast-food sandwiches and processed products such as fish sticks.

The impact is likely to be felt globally, as well as in places with working waterfronts. One of those is Maine, where more than $50 million in seafood products from Russia passed through Portland in 2021, according to federal statistics.

"If you're getting cod from Russia, it's going to be a problem," said Glen Libby, an owner of Port Clyde Fresh Catch, a seafood market in Tenants Harbor, Maine.

"That's quite a mess. We'll see how it turns out."

Russia exported more than 28

Turn to Seafood, Page 2

Dispute rocks Simsbury town hall

Complaint claims bad morale and favoritism amid exodus of staff

By Don Stacom
Hartford Courant

Four Simsbury business owners are asking selectmen to look into what they call morale-killing favoritism at town hall, but supporters of Town Manager Maria Capriola say she's built enthusiasm and professionalism with no hint of unfairness.

The dispute created waves in town Tuesday when resident Steven Antonio publicly told selectmen that the town staff is being "gutted."

Afterward, several selectmen arranged to meet next week with Antonio and three others who warn town government is being hurt.

By Friday, Antonio was emphasizing that his group wants to build teamwork, not place blame.

But at the selectmen's meeting Tuesday evening, Antonio read a letter complaining of a "toxic work environment," "favoritism" and "an arbitrary and capricious" decision made about the search for a town planner.

"We are dismayed at the disproportionate amount of people leaving the town of Simsbury's employment," Antonio said, reading from a letter cosigned by Nord Christensen, Melissa Brett and David Richman.

Antonio described the four as community-minded residents and developers who pay a combined $600,000 in property taxes, writing "to say we are stakeholders is actually an understatement."

"We are not placing blame, but must acknowledge that these departures coincide with our change to a town manager form of government," letter says. "We have observed favoritism. In addition, we've been informed of a significant decline in morale by many staff members and that a toxic work environment has emerged."

After centuries with an elected first selectman as head of local government, Simsbury voted six years ago to put a professional town manager in charge. Several of Capriola's department heads believe that's the underlying reason for the complaint.

"There will be rocky times after you make a big change like that it. It will take some time for people

Turn to Simsbury, Page 2

"We have observed favoritism ... We've been informed of a significant decline in morale by many staff members and that a toxic work environment has emerged."

— Steven Antonio, reading a letter co-signed by Nord Christensen, Melissa Brett and David Richman

Lieutenant allegedly lied after drunk driving crash

Internal probe pending into Route 190 collision

By Jesse Leavenworth
Hartford Courant

The Glastonbury police department's patrol commander reportedly lied repeatedly to Enfield police after wrecking his car while drunk, according to a police report released Friday.

Lt. Kevin Troy, 48, of East Windsor, was arrested Monday on charges of operating under the influence, interfering with an officer and failure to drive in the proper lane. Troy was released without having to post bail and is due in Hartford Superior Court on May 24.

Troy has been with the department since 2005, Capt. Mark Catania said. There is a pending internal investigation, Catania said, but he would not answer whether Troy has been placed on leave.

Enfield police say Troy downed seven glasses of red wine at an Agawam, Massachusetts, bar on the night of Feb. 6 before driving back to Connecticut and crashing his Jeep Wrangler on Route 190. Police found full and empty alcohol containers in the vehicle after the rollover near the Pearl Street overpass, the police report by Sgt. Nicole Martel-Moylan says.

Swaying back and forth and slurring his words, Troy told police at the scene that he had not been driving, the report said. He said he met two men at Murphy's Bar in Agawam, and realizing he was too intoxicated, one of them offered to drive him home in Troy's Wrangler while the other followed in another vehicle, the report says.

But Martel-Moylan said evidence showed Troy was the lone occupant and the driver of the wrecked vehicle. Blood on the left corner of the rearview

Turn to Crash, Page 2

Sanitizer found in milk cartons; dozens of NJ students sickened

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

Guida's Dairy in New Britain confirmed that a food-grade sanitizer diluted with water was inadvertently introduced during the production of its 1%, low-fat half-pint milk cartons, according to a statement from the company.

The mistake sent more than two dozen New Jersey schoolchildren to area hospitals Wednesday, according to multiple media reports.

Guida's Dairy said the product was limited to food service institutions in New Jersey.

"Out of an abundance of caution, we are disposing of any 1%, low-fat half-pint milk cartons with a sell-by date of April 11 and a timestamp between 04:30 and 07:30. The affected product is not available at retail outlets for consumer purchase, and no other Guida's Dairy products are affected."

Camden, New Jersey, public schools tweeted that "Unfortunately, many cartons were filled with the sanitizer, sealed, and then shipped out with the milk. ... Emergency teams were dispatched to the school."

A spokeswoman for Camden schools said more than 30 students from four schools were sent to two area hospitals following the discovery of the colorless substance Wednesday morning. Some were vomiting, according to N.J.com.

Camden schools tweeted that the students were sent to the hospital as a precaution.

Guida's Dairy stated that once they were made aware of the issue, they took immediate action and tested impacted product to verify there is no food safety risk.

Officials said the sanitizer is nontoxic and consumable.

State Department of Agriculture spokeswoman Rebecca Eddy said in a news release Thursday that the department is investigating the situation. She added that Guida's Dairy is asking all institutional customers possessing 1% low-fat half-pint milk cartons with a sell-by date of April 11 to dispose of the product.

"The quality of our products is deeply important to the Guida's Dairy team," the company said in a statement. "We are working with all appropriate regulatory agencies to make them aware of this issue and taking the necessary corrective actions."

Christine Dempsey can be reached at cdempsey@courant.com.

Pregnant moose may be ill, biologist says

By Jesse Leavenworth
Hartford Courant

A moose that has become a public attraction in Winchester may be infected with a brain worm that clouds its senses, allowing people to get too close, a state wildlife biologist said Friday.

"She should not be as approachable as she is," moose specialist Andrew LaBonte said. "You can get very close to her, which isn't normal. It's not safe for her."

Police have warned people to keep away from the 700-pound female, which is likely pregnant. Motorists have been pulling over in the area where the moose has been feeding, increasing the danger both to people and the animal.

The moose likely is a Connecticut resident, among 100 to 150 moose in the state, LaBonte, a biologist with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, said. Northern Connecticut is the southern end of the animals' range in New England, but moose populations have been declining throughout the region, LaBonte said.

Numbers peaked in 2009, then leveled off and started to fall, due in part to warmer temperatures and the proliferation of winter ticks. Also, moose in Connecticut are particularly susceptible to a brain parasite, LaBonte said.

The Winchester moose appeared healthy when he saw it Wednesday, Labonte said, but her behavior is concerning. The infestation of brain worms is always fatal, but the malady is prolonged and this moose may be suffering only a mild case now, he said.

Moose can move very quickly and LaBonte warned people to keep their distance. Some people have approached the animal as close as 10 to 20 feet, he said.

LaBonte says he tells people during presentations that he has benefited from brain surgery, but nothing can be done for parasite-infected moose. The pregnant cow likely will stay in the area until she bears her calf in May or June.

It's possible she could wean the calf successfully before succumbing if she has the parasite, he said.

Seafood

from Page 1

million pounds of cod to the U.S. from Jan. 1, 2020, to Jan. 31, 2022, according to census data.

The European Union and United Kingdom are both deeply dependent on Russian seafood. And prices of seafood are already spiking in Japan, a major seafood consumer that is limiting its trade with Russia.

In the U.K., where fish and chips are a cultural marker, shop owners and consumers alike are bracing for price surges. British fish and chip shops were already facing a squeeze because of soaring energy costs and rising food prices.

Andrew Crook, head of the National Federation of Fish Friers, said earlier this month that — even before the war — he expected a third of Britain's fish and chip shops to go out of business. If fish prices shoot up even higher, "we are in real dire straits," he said.

In mid-March, the U.K. slapped a 35% tariff hike on Russian whitefish, including chip-shop staples cod and haddock.

"We're a massive part of U.K. culture and it would be a shame to see that go," Crook told broadcaster ITV.

U.S. consumers are most likely to notice the impact of sanctions via price and availability of fish, said Kanae Tokunaga, who runs the Coastal and Marine Economics Lab at Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland.

"Because seafood is a global commodity, even if they are not harvested in Russia, you will notice the price hike," Tokunaga said.

In the U.S. the dependence on foreign cod stems from the loss of its own once-robust Atlantic cod fishery that cratered in the face of overfishing and environmental changes.

U.S. fishermen, based mostly in New England, brought more than 100 million pounds of cod to the docks per year in the early 1980s, but the 2020 catch was less than 2 million pounds.

Regulators have tried to save the fishery with management measures such as very low fishing quotas, and many fishermen targeting other East Coast groundfish species such as haddock and flounder now avoid cod altogether.

Seafood processors in Massachusetts are concerned about job losses due to the loss of Russian products, Democratic U.S. Sen. Ed Markey, who does support sanctions on Russia, said.

"I have heard from seafood processors in my home state with concerns about potential sudden effects of a new, immediate ban on imports on their workforce, including hundreds of union workers in the seafood processing industry," he said on the Senate floor in February.

For U.S. producers of seafood staples such as fish and chips, the lack of Russian cod could mean pivoting to other foreign sources, said Walt Golet, a research assistant professor at the University of Maine's School of Marine Sciences.

"We might be able to bring in more from Norway, a little more from Canadian fisheries," Golet said. "It really is driven by the price of those imports."

As an alternative, producers and consumers could try underutilized fish species caught domestically, such as Atlantic pollock and redfish, said Ben Martens, executive director of Maine Coast Fishermen's Association.

"Maybe this is a time to use haddock or hake or maybe monkfish, something different," Martens said.

"If it's going to disrupt supply chains, it does present an opportunity for other species to fill that void."

Crash

from Page 1

mirror, which broke off during the crash, was consistent with an open cut on the right side of Troy's forehead, she wrote.

Also, Troy reportedly had bruising on a 45-degree angle from his left shoulder slanting down to the right, a clear indicator he was wearing the driver's side seatbelt during the crash, the police report said.

Troy had called his ex-wife from the scene at 11:14 p.m., and her current husband showed up. He said Troy told the woman he had been in a crash and needed to be picked up, the report says.

Police at the scene were immediately skeptical of Troy's story, but he insisted that he had not been driving and declined to submit to field sobriety tests, the report says. An officer with a police dog searched the area, but found no disturbance in the snow, ice and leaves covering the ground and no sign of any other injured persons, police said.

Police checked Troy's story about meeting two men at the Agawam bar, but CCTV footage showed him sitting at the bar with a woman, police said. Troy arrived at the bar at 5:51 p.m. and left with the woman at 10:38 p.m., the report says. Sales receipts showed he paid for seven glasses of GH Cabernet 9 wine, several bottles of Bud Lite beer, which the woman apparently drank, a shepherd's pie and a loaded baked potato, the report says.

Police tried multiple times but could not contact Troy for a follow-up interview, the report says. The investigating officer concluded that Troy "was deceptive throughout the on-scene investigation, purposefully prolonged it unnecessarily and falsely indicated he was not the operator of his Jeep at the time of the collision.

"This caused significant police manpower to be tied up for an unnecessary extended number of hours both on scene and for subsequent investigatory follow-ups," Martel-Moylan wrote.

"The accused went so far as trying to elude police detection of his operation of his Jeep prior to their arrival on scene by calling family members to pick him up as quickly as possible" after the crash and not calling police himself, the report says.

Information from the Wrangler's computer showed it was traveling at 56 mph and no brakes were applied before the crash, police said. The driver's side seatbelt was buckled; the passenger side was not, the report said.

Jesse Leavenworth can be reached at jleavenworth@courant.com

April in Paris film festival is back with 9 movies in 7 days

By Susan Dunne
Hartford Courant

The April in Paris film festival, which took a two-year hiatus due to COVID, is back in 2022 with a slate of nine French-language films to be shown at Cinestudio in Hartford from April 3-9.

Among the offerings are one of the most acclaimed thrillers of all time — the 1955 classic "Les Diaboliques" — a 1928 silent film set at the Eiffel Tower and a modern-day adaptation of Sophocles' ancient Greek play "Antigone."

The films come from France, Belgium, Canada, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire. All will be shown at Cinestudio, at 300 Summit St., on the campus of Trinity College in Hartford. Admission for each film is $10, $8 students and seniors, $7 Friends of Cinestudio. A closing reception will be April 9 at 7 p.m. More information at aprilinparis.org.

Schedule

April 3, 2:30 p.m.: "The Mystery of the Eiffel Tower," Julien Duvivier's 1928 silent film, accompanied by Patrick Miller on piano. It tells the story of a thief chased through Paris by menacing men in hoods.
April 3, 7:30 p.m.: "Les Diaboliques," Henri-Georges Clouzot's story of two women (Simone Signoret and Vera Clouzot) who plot to kill a man, but they don't anticipate the aftermath of the killing.
April 4, 7:30 p.m.: "A Tale of Summer," Eric Rohmer's 1995 comedy about a man and three women.
April 5, 7:30 p.m.: "A Dramatic Film," Eric Baudelaire's 2019 documentary about a Paris middle school, which touches on themes of Islamophobia, assimilation and economic inequality.



"A Dramatic Film," Eric Baudelaire's documentary about a Paris middle school, is part of the April in Paris film festival in Hartford. **THE CINEMA GUILD**

April 6, 7:30 p.m.: "Slalom," Charlene Favier's drama about a ski instructor exploiting his young protégé.
April 7, 7:30 p.m.: "Little Girl," Eric Baudelaire's 2019 drama about a transgender child.
April 8, 7:30 p.m.: "Night of the Kings," Philippe Lacote's 2020 drama from France, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Canada, about a youth who saves his life in prison by telling a lengthy story.
April 9, 2:30 p.m.: "The Society of the Spectacle," Guy Debord's 1974 documentary collage about capitalism, imagery and power.
April 9, 8 p.m.: "Antigone," a 2019 Canadian drama, directed by Sophie Deraspe, which sets Sophocles' drama in an immigrant community in Montreal. A Q&A with the film's star, Nahema Ricci, will follow the screening.

Susan Dunne can be reached at sdunne@courant.com.

Simsbury

from Page 1

to get used to it," Recreation Director Tom Tyburski said. "Whoever came in after that was going to have a tough road. She's handled it well."

Capriola was hired in early 2018, and has been Simsbury's only town manager.

On Friday, First Selectman Wendy Mackstutis acknowledged that a disproportionate number of staffers in the town planner's office have left in the past several years. But they didn't indicate their reasons for leaving, and there's no evidence that it was over conflict with Capriola, she said.

Antonio's letter claimed several town employees left because of Capriola, and warned that far too many Simsbury workers are walking off.

But Selectman Eric Wellman, who served as first selectman until November, said that's just not accurate.

Town hall's employment roster shows 4.6% of Simsbury's staff resigned or retired between 2019 and now, compared to a national average of 20% for municipalities, Wellman and Capriola reported.

"With the pandemic, a lot of employers struggled with their retention rate. But our analysis shows that wasn't the case for us," Capriola said. "We didn't have a problem with a mass exodus."

Mackstutis also questioned the accusation of favoritism, saying it appeared to be because one applicant for the town planner's position was allowed to advance through the hiring process despite lacking a requirement in the job description.

That is common in private business, where employers may find a candidate's strengths outweigh deficiency, she said. And either way, the town didn't choose that applicant, she noted.

Mackstutis, however, said the selectmen's personnel committee on April 14 will discuss a stronger system for procuring exit interviews from staffers as they leave. She emphasized that Capriola helped create the system, and did so long before Antonio's complaint.

"We will investigate any credible claim that's formally brought to us. But the letter from the business leaders did not have specifics — there's not enough there for us to investigate," Wellman said.

Officials said only one departing worker complained of unfairness, and that was rejected.

After Assistant Town Planner Robin Newton was dismissed in late 2019, she formally complained that Capriola targeted her unfairly, perhaps because of her union activity. Selectmen hired a law firm to investigate, and it found no discrimination. Newton ultimately retracted the complaint.

Mackstutis attributed much of the recent complaint letter to "gossip" and misinformation.

Tyburski and Police Chief Nicholas Boulter both said Friday that Capriola has been consistently professional and encouraging.

"I've never seen anything but professional, courteous, respectful, insightful work from Maria. It has been an absolute pleasure working for her," said Boulter, who has spent 23 with the Simsbury police force.

Boulter said he regularly seeks Capriola at meetings with other department heads, local agencies, business owners and citizens.

"She's extremely inclusive and she always seeks opinions," Boulter said.

Tyburski said that's been his experience too.

"I never had a supervisor who made me feel more supported than Maria does," he said. "She's highly intelligent, she thinks through all the angles, she helps us through difficult situations. And she looks at the big picture, not just a two-year picture."

Peace

from Page 1

Schmidt, who has taken dozens of students to visit Ukraine in past years, said that he has been in contact with a friend in Mariupol, a city in southern Ukraine besieged by Russian forces. Through that connection, he offered his class a direct window into the conflict.

"[My class] spent an evening scraping information on social media in order to try to find out what towns, what rail stations, were still under Ukrainian control, so that he could escape," Schmidt said at the rally. "I think of that friend, and how he had to leave behind his parents, who are in their 80s, and walk out of Mariupol."

Dr. Oksana Goroshchuk, 32, a postdoctoral associate at the Yale School of Medicine who is originally from Kyiv, said that as a Ukrainian who lives aboard, she bears a responsibility to stand up for her homeland.

"The Ukrainian nation always chose democracy, cherished freedom of speech and worked hard to become an economically and socially prosperous country," she said. "Together, we are taking the responsibility to make the world a better place, because we are truly democratic nations."

For Yulia Lozynska, 21, a University of New Haven junior studying criminal justice, witnessing the crisis from afar has taken a toll. Lozynska was born and raised in Stamford, but her parents are from Lviv, a city in western Ukraine, and she said she still has friends and relatives in the country.

"Waking up every morning, all I do is check my phone and call my family to make sure they are safe and alive," Lozynska said. "It's hard to express the feelings I have: anger, sadness and feeling hopeless."

Orysia Yanovski, 74, of East Haven, who was born in Ukraine, said that she was heartened to see local support for Ukrainians trapped in the conflict. Her own congregation, St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church in New Haven, has been raising funds for the crisis, she said, and has already sent a number of truckloads of supplies to Ukraine.

Holding a sign that read "Save Ukraine!" Yanovski helped lead the group in a rendition of the Ukrainian national anthem, which was accompanied by a student brass band.

"These words were written before this war," Bradley Woodworth, an associate professor of history at the University of New Haven, told the crowd at the conclusion of the song.

"It may take some time before fate will yet smile on Ukrainians and their enemies vanished in the sun," he said. "I certainly pray that they will rule again in the land of their own."

Eliza Fawcett can be reached at elfawcett@courant.com.

CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT

No mandate expected for 2nd booster shot

Additional dose urged for those at higher risk and residents over 65

By Jenna Carlesso
CT Mirror

State officials are encouraging people with multiple co-morbidities and older residents — especially those over 65 — to get a second booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, recently approved for those 50 and older.

But for now, officials are not considering mandating second booster shots for nursing home staff and other long-term care facility workers.

In January, Gov. Ned Lamont issued an executive order requiring those employees and any contractors who work with nursing homes get a COVID-19 booster shot.

"I do not anticipate that we are going to be moving in that direction," Dr. Manisha Juthani, Connecticut's public health commissioner, said Thursday.

"The older you are, the more likely I'd say you should go out and get it," she said. "If you're a 50-year-old and you've got diabetes, hypertension, COPD, and lymphoma ... you may functionally not be a 50-year-old. Functionally, you might be much older.

"I think for the younger age groups of those who are eligible, there is certainly less urgency. The only urgency I see is that we may have somewhat of a spike or surge coming up over the next several weeks. So getting a shot may be another way to just protect yourself a little bit further."

People who get a second booster now should still be able to receive a third booster in the fall, should one be recommended at that time, Juthani said.

"If you were to get it sometime now, before whatever surge might be coming up ... you [also] could get a COVID booster in September or October and be within that window when you would need your booster dose anyway," she said. "Getting it now, either your first or your second booster, you should still be able to get a booster in the fall."

Nursing home executives said they favor second boosters for qualifying residents of long-term care facilities. Another round of on-site clinics could be organized in the coming weeks.

"The nursing home industry and long term care community is going to be strongly supportive of the second booster for the residents they serve," said Matthew Barrett, president and CEO of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, which represents 145 nursing homes. "It offers maximum protection. For the vulnerable population that we serve, the vaccine has demonstrated in study after study that it lessens the severity of illness."

CDC, FDA give OK

Adults 50 and older are now eligible to receive a second COVID-19 booster shot made by Pfizer or Moderna, following authorizations this week by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

People 12 and older with immune deficiencies also qualify for a second booster, including those who are receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood, those who got a stem cell transplant within the last two years and those who received a solid organ transplant and are taking medication to suppress the immune system.

People in eligible age groups or with qualifying medical conditions can get the second booster at least four months after they received the first. Those who got two doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine can also seek a booster dose of the Pfizer or Moderna shots.

"What we're seeing as we go through this pandemic and we monitor people's immunity is that immunity does wane," Juthani said in an interview. "Initially, it was six months after you get a shot, then you can get a booster. Then it became five months. Now we're talking about four months. So I think what we're trying to find is that sweet spot where we can have the most durable immunity, depending on what type of population you are."

Unlike last fall, when people were strongly urged to get a booster shot as the highly contagious omicron variant arrived in the U.S., state and federal officials have framed the latest round of boosters as a choice that eligible people may want to pursue. Part of that is due to the so-far unknown influence of BA.2, a subvariant of omicron that could cause another swell in cases here in the coming weeks or months.

BA.2, considered even more contagious than omicron, is now the dominant version of the virus in the U.S., accounting for about 55% of new cases recorded during the week that ended on Saturday, The New York Times reported. The subvariant has caused a surge in cases in Europe. So far in Connecticut, the single-day positivity rate, which had hovered around 2.5% recently, increased to more than 3% last week and has remained above that threshold this week. It was 3.95% on Thursday.

"What we are dealing with right now with BA.2 is an unknown potential spike that might come, and a population of older adults, many of whom got their booster shots back in October," Juthani said. "It's been many months since they got their booster. And with a potential unknown rise, this is something we've got in the pharmacy cabinet that can help protect our most vulnerable."

An FDAF.D.A. advisory panel is set to meet on April 6 to weigh a strategy for booster shots in the future. As of Tuesday, 2.7 million, or 75.8% of Connecticut residents were fully vaccinated. Of those, more than 1.4 million, or 51%, had received a booster.

"What I hope over time is that we're going to be able to get into some sort of cadence of respiratory viral season and being up to date with your COVID vaccine and flu shot and all that going into the fall," Juthani said.

Contracting watchdog clears key hurdle to add investigative staff

Staff report

The state's contracting watchdog panel has moved one step closer to getting the investigative staff it has sought since its inception 13 years ago.

The Government Administration and Elections Committee voted 16-0 to approve a bill mandating that the five investigative posts sought by the State Contracting Standards Board be filled before the first quarter of the next fiscal year ends, in late September.

Senate Bill 473 also would expand the contracting board's authority to probe quasi-public agencies and would shield it from any emergency budget reductions once the fiscal year is underway. The latter provision would match protection the legislature has long provided to other major watchdog groups such as the Freedom of Information and Elections Enforcement commissions and the Office of State Ethics.

"I was thrilled it was bipartisan and unanimous, and I hope that means there's a real shot at having a fully functioning, fully independent contracting standards board in the state of Connecticut after 15 years," state Sen. Mae Flexer, D-Windham, co-chairwoman of the committee, said after the meeting.

Pressure from legislators to strengthen the contracting watchdog has intensified since early February following reports that the FBI is investigating school construction work and other projects once overseen by Gov. Ned Lamont's former deputy budget director, Konstantinos Diamantis.

A federal grand jury issued a subpoena for all emails, text messages and attachments involving Diamantis and a broad range of construction projects on Oct. 20, eight days before the governor's office removed Diamantis from his budget post and suspended him without pay from his other role as director of the school construction program.

Contracting board Chairman Lawrence Fox called this week's vote "a good sign. ... I think we can help to steer the culture of competitive bidding and transparency in the state" government.

But it remained unclear Monday whether Lamont would support the measure.

Prior to the Diamantis scandal, Lamont had said the contracting standards board was performing watchdog functions already performed by other agencies, something that Fox and other advocates for the board have rejected.

The board was the linchpin of the "Clean Contracting" system created in 2007 by the Democrat-controlled legislature and Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell, Connecticut's response to the contracting scandals that drove Republican Gov. John G. Rowland from office amid an impeachment inquiry in July 2004. Rowland later served 10 months in federal prison after admitting he accepted about $100,000 in gifts from state contractors and his staff.

The board was empowered to review Executive Branch agencies' contracting processes to ensure they were transparent, cost-efficient and in compliance with the law. It also would have authority to suspend any procurement effort deemed improper.

But not long after its creation the state would fall into the Great Recession, state government finances would slip into the red, and legislators and Rell would siphon away nearly all resources, leaving the volunteer standards board with no staff.

An executive director would be hired in 2011, but no additional staff was added as the Democratic governors' that succeeded Rell — Dannel P. Malloy and Lamont — both questioned the need for the watchdog group.

The contracting board sought permission last spring to begin probing a Connecticut Port Authority contract for renovations to the state pier in New London. The pier is a key staging point to help development of a major offshore wind-to-energy project.

Lawmakers expanded the board's authority to review this quasi-public agency and included $450,000 to increase staffing. But, in a last-minute concession to Lamont, the legislature then effectively took the funding away.



David Kooris, chairman of the Connecticut Port Authority board of directors, speaks with reporters as Gov. Ned Lamont looks on at New London's State Pier on March 22. HARTFORD COURANT

This year, though, Lamont softened his position somewhat. His new budget proposal in February did not include new funding directly for the contracting board, but the governor did recommend empowering the group to make referrals to the state auditors' office — which has no enforcement power. Lamont also recommended adding three positions to the auditors' staff to accommodate any referrals from the contracting board.

Max Reiss, the governor's communications director, said that "Governor Lamont has been on the record stating his support for the contracting standards board having the tools it needs to be effective."

But if by "tools" Lamont means access to the auditors' office but no additional staff, Fox said, the contracting board can't be effective.

When asked to clarify whether the governor now would fund five investigative posts within the contracting standards board office to work with its executive director, Reiss said, "That's a legitimate proposal. We will take a look at it."

Besides mandating that the full investigative staff sought by the contracting board be hired, the bill approved in committee on Monday also would expand the watchdog's authority to probe all quasi-public agencies created by the legislature, not just the Connecticut Port Authority.

But even if the full legislature and Lamont agree on this measure, it wouldn't be effective unless — this time — they also fund the new positions.

Fox said Monday that "I'm hopeful" this will happen. "But after last year, I wouldn't say I'm confident."

Schaghticoke Tribal Nation supports Derby's Red Raiders' nickname

By Pat Eaton-Robb
Associated Press

A small American Indian tribe is supporting Derby's attempt to retain funding put in jeopardy by its continued use of a Native American mascot and imagery for its schools' athletic teams.

The Schaghticoke Tribal Nation, which has just over 100 members in Western Connecticut, passed a resolution this month supporting the city of Derby's use of the nickname "Red Raiders" and logos that include an arrowhead and the profile of the head of an American Indian.

The tribe says it supports the use of those images "as a public means of sustaining Native American culture and history of Connecticut's first citizens," according to the March 15 resolution from the tribal council.

Derby Board of Education Chair Jim Gildea said city officials sat down with tribal leaders, including Schaghticoke Chief Richard Velky, to discuss the issue. He said the city explained the images are meant to honor the area's Native American heritage. He also said the term "Red Raiders" has nothing to do with skin color.

"It's similar to the Duke Blue Devils, the Tulane Green Wave," he said. "Through the years, people may have lost sight of that, but Derby High School's colors are red and white."

The state last year enacted a law that requires municipalities whose athletic teams use Native American names or mascots to receive written support from a state or federally recognized tribe in Connecticut or risk losing state grants derived from revenue at the state's two tribal casinos, The Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Most of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns receive a grant from the Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Fund, with extra money earmarked for communities located near the gaming centers. The amounts are based on a formula that involves a number of factors, including the value of untaxable property within the community. Payments are made three times a year and can total as much as $5 million or more for the larger cities.

Derby is slated to receive $207,304 for the 2023 fiscal year, according to the state.

Medicaid

from Page 1

well as for public health," she said. "I was having a lot of challenges, because this was a child who did not have insurance. It's the kind of thing where there are a lot of extra steps involved to make sure that we can get kids the health care they need and deserve."

Rosenberg has advocated for the Medicaid expansion.

"The challenges we have faced in making sure that undocumented children can get the care they need has been incredibly disheartening," she said in an interview. "I've been so hopeful that Connecticut could support this legislation. ... I really cannot think of anything else that could be more important for children's health. It can't come soon enough."

Legislators supporting the bill did not expect it to fail in committee. In an interview before the vote, state Sen. Marilyn Moore, a Democrat from Bridgeport and a co-chair of the Human Services Committee, predicted it would likely pass.

"I don't think it's a good look for anyone to deny this type of health care to people, especially children," she said.

But, in a 10-10 tie vote, the bill failed, with every Republican and three of the committee's 13 Democrats voting against it, including co-chair Rep. Cathy Abercrombie, D-Meriden. The Medicaid expansion is the only proposal that the Human Services Committee did not pass this session.

Some legislators voiced concerns that the expansion was premature because of a lack of information regarding the number of residents who would qualify for the program and what the cost would be to the state. Last year's bill mandated the Office of Health Strategy to conduct a feasibility study on expanding coverage to all children 18 and younger that would address those points, but the findings are not due until July. During the committee vote, many legislators said they felt the bill should not pass before the findings are available.

Though the feasibility study is not yet complete, the Connecticut Health Foundation and Georgetown University published a brief in September 2020 that addressed many of the questions raised during the committee meeting.

The Migration Policy Institute estimated that, at the time, there were around 13,000 undocumented children 18 and younger in Connecticut. The brief estimated that about 4,550 children would enroll during the first year of eligibility and that the total number of children enrolled would reach 5,590 by the second year, costing about $11.3 million in the first year and $13.9 million in the second. Most of those findings were not presented during committee debate.

House Speaker Matthew Ritter, D-Hartford, said the issue would be part of the upcoming budget negotiations, but he did not predict an outcome. The cost of the expansion and the fact that the state commissioner of social services testified against the bill are things lawmakers will also have to consider, he said.

Deidre Gifford, the commissioner, said in her testimony that the state would be unable to claim federal funding for those who would qualify for coverage under the measure, meaning Connecticut would incur "significant additional program costs" to extend the benefit.

Asked whether he supported the measure, a spokesman for Gov. Ned Lamont said the governor is reviewing the proposal.

"We did have this conversation last year. We reached a compromise to [the 8 years old and younger] age group, and that was not easy to do," Ritter said. "So there are a lot of people who are going to have to be involved in this conversation in the next couple of weeks. And a lot of it may come down to what the Appropriations Committee has with the spending cap and what people have as priorities."

Senate President Pro Tem Martin Looney, D-New Haven, a supporter of the Medicaid expansion, said the bill has "a very good chance" of being included in the budget process. Looney said he is concerned for children who would face an "arbitrary" cutoff after age 8.

Some lawmakers said if the expansion to age 18 was unsuccessful, they would weigh an amendment that would at least allow children who are turning 9 in 2023 to keep the benefit through the end of the calendar year. Legislators have not yet openly discussed that idea.

Looney said he hopes the HUSKY expansion will be included in the budget.

"These are children who are now residents of Connecticut, they are in need of health coverage and they are likely to be long-term residents of Connecticut," he said. "There is a basic need to treat children humanely when they have illnesses that need care. It really is just a matter of simple humanity to incorporate the care of these children in our health care system."

Jenna Carlesso and Katy Golvala are reporters for The Connecticut Mirror (https://ctmirror.org/).
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LIVING

CELEBRITIES

Producer: Cops ready to arrest Smith

From news services



Will Packer, who produced the show, is seen Sunday at the Academy Awards in California. **DAVID LIVINGSTON/GETTY**

Oscars producer Will Packer said Los Angeles police were ready to arrest Will Smith after Smith slapped Chris Rock on the Academy Awards stage.

"They were saying, you know, this is battery, was a word they used in that moment," Packer said in a clip released by ABC News Thursday of an interview he gave to "Good Morning America." "They said we will go get him. We are prepared. ... You can press charges, we can arrest him."

But Packer said Rock was "very dismissive" of the idea. "He was like, 'No, no, no, I'm fine,'" Packer said. "And even to the point where I said, 'Rock, let them finish.' The LAPD officers finished laying out what his options were, and they said, 'Would you like us to take any action?' And he said no."

The LAPD said in a statement after Sunday's ceremony that they were aware of the incident and that Rock had declined to file a police report.

In the full interview that aired Friday on "GMA," Packer said he initially believed the slap was an orchestrated bit. "I thought it was part of something that Chris and Will were doing on their own. I thought it was a bit. I wasn't concerned at all."

Packer said he went up to Rock after the incident. "I said, 'Did he really hit you?' " the producer asked Rock. "And he looked at me, and he goes, 'Yeah, I just took a punch from Muhammad Ali,' as only Chris can. He was immediately in joke mode, but you could tell that he was very much still in shock."

Rock publicly addressed the incident for the first time, but only briefly, at a stand-up show Wednesday in Boston. He said, "I'm still kind of processing what happened."

Schneider visits White House: The White House hosted "Jeopardy!" champion Amy Schneider, the quiz show's first openly transgender winner to qualify for its Tournament of Champions, on Transgender Day of Visibility on Thursday.

Schneider met with second gentleman Doug Emhoff, who joined Rachel Levine, the assistant health secretary and the first openly transgender federal official to be confirmed by the Senate, for a conversation with transgender kids and their parents.

Schneider spoke out against bills affecting transgender people.

"They're really scary and some of them in particular that are denying medical services to trans youth ... those are lifesaving medical treatments," Schneider said. "These bills will cause the deaths of children and that's really sad to me and it's really frightening."

Schneider spoke of "being a trans person out there that isn't monstrous and isn't threatening and is just a normal person, like we all are," and said, "the more that people like me can be seen, the harder it is to sustain the myths that are ... kind of driving a lot of this hate and fear."

Razzies cancel Willis category: The Golden Raspberry Awards, which recognize the worst of cinema, have canceled its 2021 special category for Worst Performance by Bruce Willis. "The Razzies have made the decision to rescind the Razzie Award given to Bruce Willis, due to his recently disclosed diagnosis," the awards' co-founders said in a statement to the Wrap on Thursday. In February, the Razzies created a stand-alone category for Willis, who appeared in eight movies last year. Willis' family announced Wednesday the actor's diagnosis of aphasia.

April 2 birthdays: Actor Linda Hunt is 77. Singer Emmylou Harris is 75. Actor Christopher Meloni is 61. Singer Keren Woodward is 61. Actor Clark Gregg is 60. Actor Pedro Pascal is 47. Actor Adam Rodriguez is 47. Actor Michael Fassbender is 45. Actor Bethany Joy Lenz is 41. Actor Jesse Plemons is 34.



ASK AMY

By Amy Dickinson

askamy@amydickinson.com Twitter@askingamy

Serious illness dismissed as psychosomatic

Dear Amy: When I was pregnant with my first child, I was diagnosed with a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum.

It causes debilitating nausea, uncontrollable vomiting and dehydration, and in severe cases, can be life-threatening.

During the course of my pregnancy, I had to go to the ER eight times and was admitted to the hospital for four days. HG also led to other pregnancy complications, and I delivered my son by emergency C-section 10 weeks early.

It was by far the most difficult thing either my husband or I have ever been through.

I am now pregnant with my second child and thankfully am enjoying a normal pregnancy.

The problem is that my mother-in-law has taken my good health now as a "sign" that I was never really sick the first time.

She has expressed that my first pregnancy distress was really a psychological issue because I was "so afraid I wouldn't have a healthy baby."

I'm not sure why she says things like this, and it really upsets me.

My husband says I need to learn that her opinions just don't matter, but I'm still upset.

Any advice on how to gracefully shut her down?

— Not "All in My Head"

Dear Not: Because of her lack of compassion toward you, your mother-in-law has surrendered her privilege to know about or discuss your health. Your health — past or present — should be off the table.

If she raises her theory about your first pregnancy again, you can say, "I'm going to have to interrupt you mid-thought. Let's not discuss my health, OK?"

Your husband is right: His mother's opinions about your health struggles don't matter, and your behavior will demonstrate that from here on out, it is not up for discussion.

Dear Amy: I have a family member who lives in another state but has a second home in my state.

They come to their second home but are never willing to come see my family. I have tried to meet them, given them ideas to get together and have even offered to meet halfway so they don't have to drive so far. They are never willing to come to see us or drive to our house. In six years, we have seen them once.

The worst part is, they send us messages saying, "We will be in your state for the next week and would love to see you," but they always make excuses.

My children always ask when they will see this family member's kids (their cousins), and I am honestly tired of telling my kids that they have canceled on us.

What should I do?

— Tired of Trying

Dear Tired: It sounds as if it is something of a journey for your family member to travel to their second home, and that you live some distance from this home. They obviously are not willing to extend their journey to visit you.

The next time they message you that they will be in your state, you should be honest and say, "We really want to see you, and the kids are eager to get together, but we never seem to make it work. What are your suggestions?"

They may ask for you to drive to their home. They may hedge or make a plan and then cancel.

I agree with your sentiment that if these family members really wanted to see you and the kids, they would work harder to make it happen. It is a tough realization that your family values are different from theirs, but if you've exhausted every reasonable effort to see them, you will have to accept it.

Dear Amy: I enjoyed your "Best of" column devoted to the occasional challenges faced by short people.

Years ago, our firm hired a super-duper Mr. Fix-It guy. He had a series of conference phone calls, and always sounded very tough and gruff. I pictured a John Wayne or General Patton type of guy.

I met him in person one day, and he was short and petite, but with a booming voice. I said to him, "You sound much taller on the phone."

He laughed and responded, "No, this is the tallest I have ever been!"

It was great.

— A Reader

Dear Reader: What strikes me is that any person outside of what might be considered the "norm" (whatever that is), seems to need a great comeback line. That's unfortunate.

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MUSIC REVIEWS

Mehldau cuts experimental album

Brad Mehldau's new album includes a cover of the Rush song "Tom Sawyer," which brings to mind Mark Twain, which brings to mind a quote attributed to Twain regarding the music of Mahler: "It's better than it sounds."

That critique could apply here.

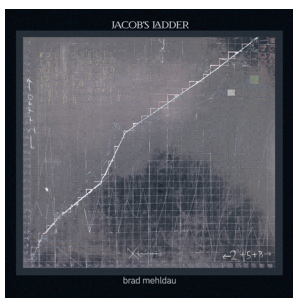
Mehldau is perhaps the most lyrical jazz pianist of his generation. He's also drawn to a genre that could be called restless-soul music — challenging, experimental, boundary-defying material, such as "Jacob's Ladder."

The 70-minute set features pretty piano, yes. There's also anguished screaming, squawky sax, mysterious meter, reading from scripture and shouted German philosophy. It's odd and uneven, and no one will complain it's too short.

Even so, Mehldau's ambition is to be admired, and prog rock fans will likely love it. He draws on Genesis — the book and the band — as he considers our climb toward heaven and our relationship with God.

Rush is a recurring touchstone, and there are also nods to Yes, Bach, math metal, David Byrne, Tropicalia, free-jazz funk and video games. Guests include Chris Thile and Cecile McLorin Salvant, but Mehldau does the heavy lifting — on one cut he plays 11 instruments and contributes layered wordless vocals.

With music, however, as with spiritual matters, sometimes less is more. The conclusion of the final tune features an ordinary 4/4 beat and three-chord pattern explored by Mehldau's solo piano. Like Mahler at his best, it sounds heavenly. — *Steven Wine, Associated Press*



'Jacob's Ladder'
Brad Mehldau
(Nonesuch Records)



'Get It!'
Rick Holmstrom
(LuEllie Records)

Guitarist Rick Holmstrom's new album is an all-instrumental collection of toe-tappers, thigh-slappers and finger-snappers. There's an irresistible backbeat, and the mood is upbeat. Grin and hear it.

Holmstrom, who has worked with Mavis Staples for the past 15 years, draws on antecedents reaching back much farther than that, to the days when the electric guitar was ubiquitous on the pop charts. His playing is a stylish swirl of hipster funk, twang, the blues and garage rock — in fact, most of "Get It!" was recorded in a Los Angeles garage.

Accompanied by drummer Steve Mugalian and bassist Gregory Boaz, Holmstrom tears through 14 tunes, all original, in less than 40 minutes. There's plenty of playful interplay and the rhythm always jumps, whether Holmstrom's band of joy is evoking a prayer meeting, sock hop, beach party or juke joint.

Holmstrom plays a distinctive mix of lead and rhythm guitar. His neck excursions combine dips and scoops, lyrical runs, toggles between registers and shimmering chord clusters. Notes cascade, collide, argue and agree. It's all in good fun, and words would just get in the way. — *Steven Wine*

Singer-songwriter Elliah Heifetz's debut album is a cheerful reminder Americana has roots in many countries.

Heifetz was raised on food stamps in Philadelphia as the son of Soviet political refugees, and his melting pot musical mix ranges from Eastern European folk and Yiddish theater to Jimmy Buffett and John Prine.

Heifetz's voice could be mistaken for Steve Goodman's, and there's a twinkle in his twangy tenor as he finds humor in the immigrant experience. But it's not all yuks as he reflects on outliers and outsiders, dislocation, disorientation and striving to belong in the land of plenty.

"I'm foreign as the fourth day of July," Heifetz sings. He shows it by name-checking Waylon Jennings, Donovan McNabb and Chuck E. Cheese, and that's just on the autobiographical, Cajun-tinged title cut.

Other highlights include the stomper "Molly Margarita," which describes a visit to Costco as a religious experience, and "The Last Great American Cameleer," a Baghdad-to-Texas lament about trying to ride high.

Heifetz, a Yale alum who has enjoyed success as a composer for New York stages and network TV, recorded the album in Nashville with a stellar supporting cast. The arrangements include pedal steel, fiddle and accordion — immigrant instruments for songs that could only be made in America. — *Steven Wine*

HOROSCOPES

Tarot.com

Aries (March 21-April 19): There is great power in your words. Your image may be hurt if you go too far. Chiming in on a social media post that you disagree with might be tempting, but your fiery feelings could cause you to take your comeback a step further than it needs to go.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): It might be difficult to explain your thoughts. Your emotions could overwhelm you while you're trying to tell a story. This doesn't mean that you should keep your mouth shut. Instead, see things from the other person's perspective when you're trying to communicate.

Gemini (May 21-June 20): A friend could hit a nerve by accident. You may feel like they aren't listening to you, or their response might sting you in a way that you weren't expecting. Instead of acting defensive, try and think through what they meant, and let them know how you're feeling.

Cancer (June 21-July 22): The approval of others might be elusive. You may be proud of a recent accomplishment, but someone could still rain on your parade. While this might be purposeful, they may simply be in a world of their own. Try to understand that they're living their own life and don't let them dim your light!

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Minor annoyances may try to spoil your mood. It may seem like someone creates a new problem to replace the one you just solved. Knowing this going into today will help prepare you to roll with the punches. Loosen up your shoulders and get ready to overcome challenges life might throw your way.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Negative thoughts may cloud your mind, but they shouldn't shut you down. Doubt has the potential to creep in and create problems. You might experience a setback that leads to the onset of these concerns. Give yourself five minutes to complain, but then get back up.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Too many cooks in the kitchen can spoil the meal. You might be receiving input from several different sources, and each one thinks that they know what's best. It can be overwhelming, so remind yourself that you don't have to take everyone's advice.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Words said in anger are difficult to take back. You may have a moment where you believe that someone has to shoulder the blame for this situation. In reality, it's likely a combination of different factors . Breathe through the initial anger and remind yourself that revenge only adds to the hurt.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A lack of planning could come back to haunt you. Organization and paying attention to detail are key, because your main pitfalls likely come from a shaky foundation. Spontaneity is often a good thing, but you may forget about an important meeting or lose something if you're playing it by ear.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A negative thought is no place to linger. You could get lost in your own head, spiraling into potential scenarios. Although it's good to be prepared, sometimes preparation can slip into fearmongering. Stay occupied today; your busy mind can help you avoid imaginary disaster.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Something may currently be holding you back from fully expressing yourself. Knowing the difference between fear and intuition will help you know with whom to share your thoughts, and you can journal about things you're truly too afraid to say.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Someone might try to throw you off your rhythm today. You may have a way that you like to do your tasks, and someone in your life could be trying to take the reins. Try to find a compromise. Doing things their way may cause you to feel untrue to yourself. Your vision is as worthy as theirs!

TODAY IN HISTORY

Associated Press

On April 2, 1792, Congress passed the Coinage Act, which authorized establishment of the U.S. Mint.

In 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and most of his Cabinet fled the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, because of advancing Union forces.

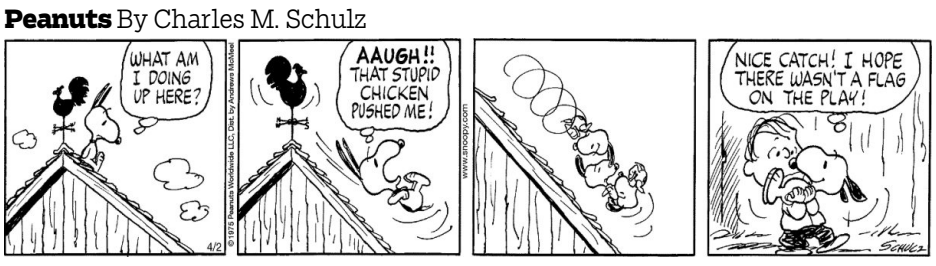
In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany, saying, "The world must be made safe for democracy."

In 1992, mob boss John Gotti was convicted in New York of murder and racketeering; he was later sentenced to life and died in prison.

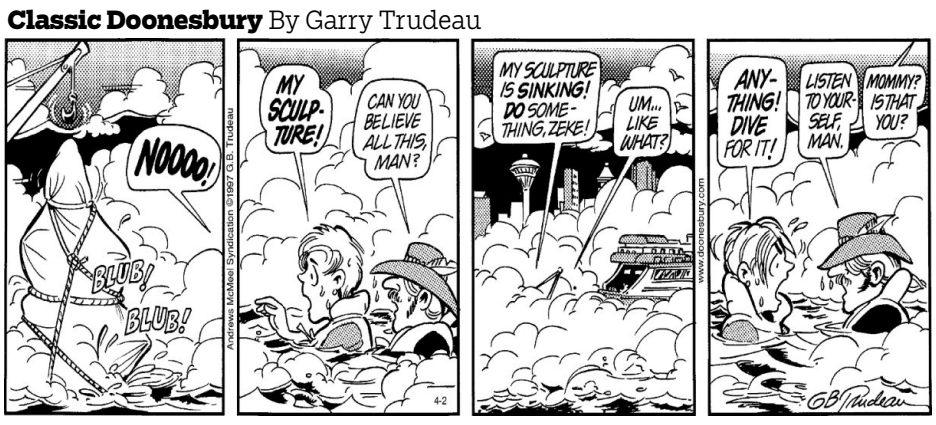
In 2005, Pope John Paul II died at age 84.

In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency, ruled 5-4 that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases were air pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

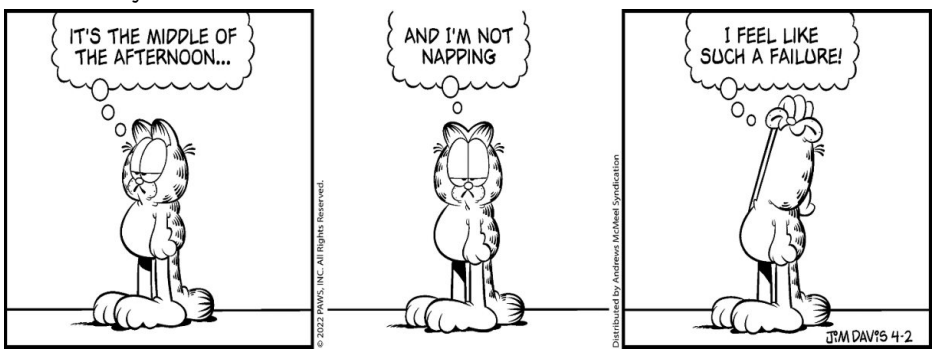
Peanuts By Charles M. Schulz



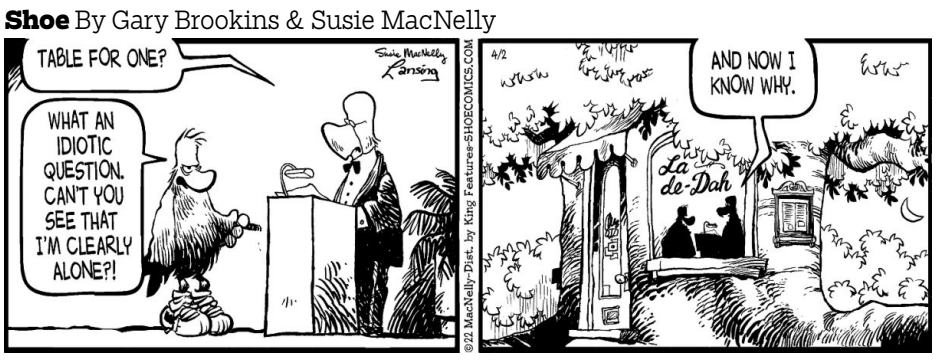
Classic Doonesbury By Garry Trudeau



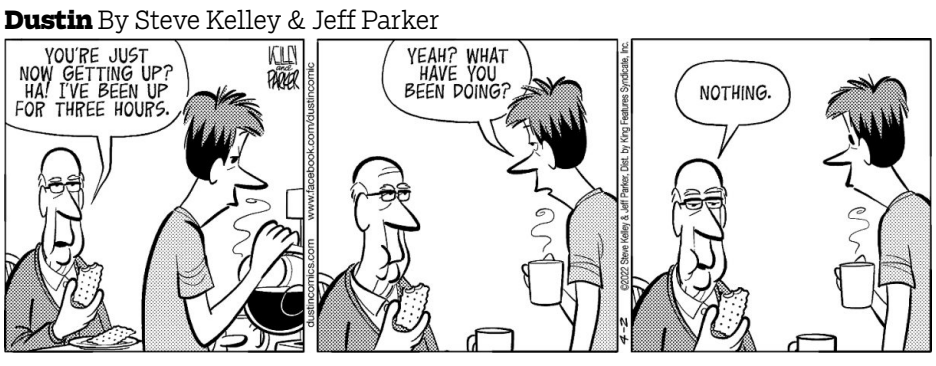
Garfield By Jim Davis



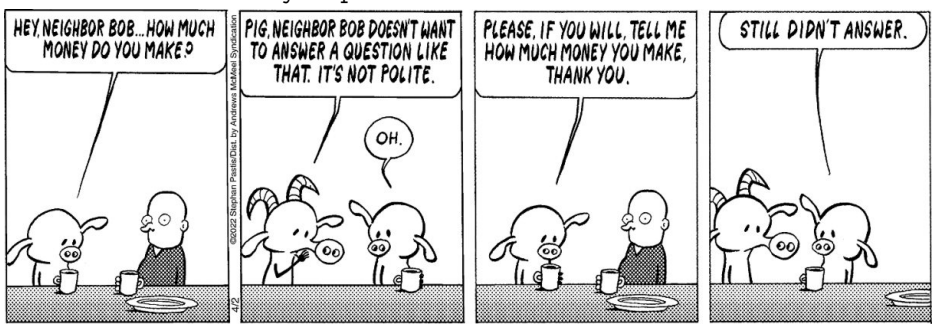
Shoe By Gary Brookins & Susie MacNelly



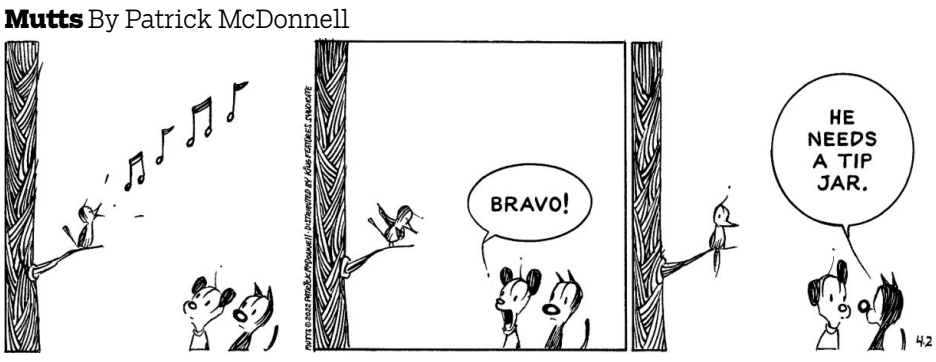
Dustin By Steve Kelley & Jeff Parker



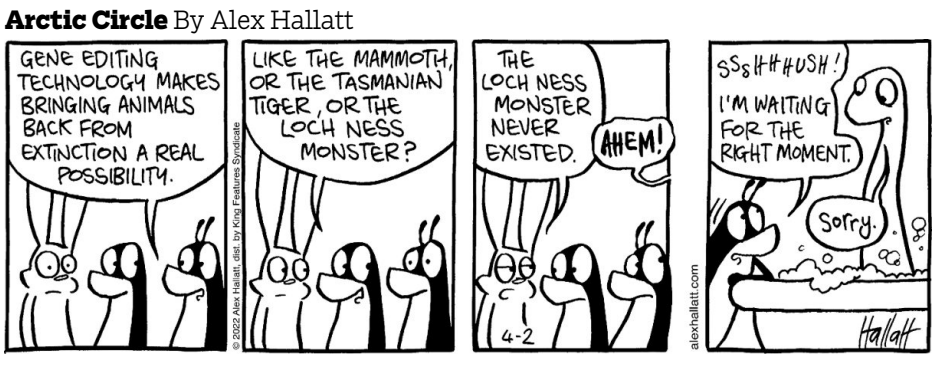
Pearls Before Swine By Stephan Pastis



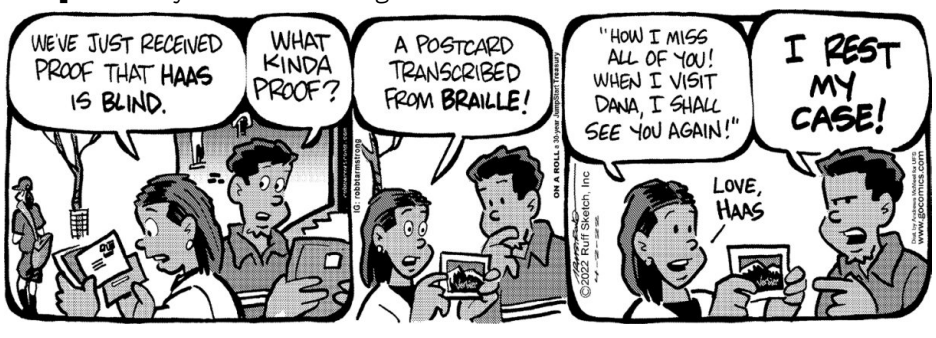
Mutts By Patrick McDonnell



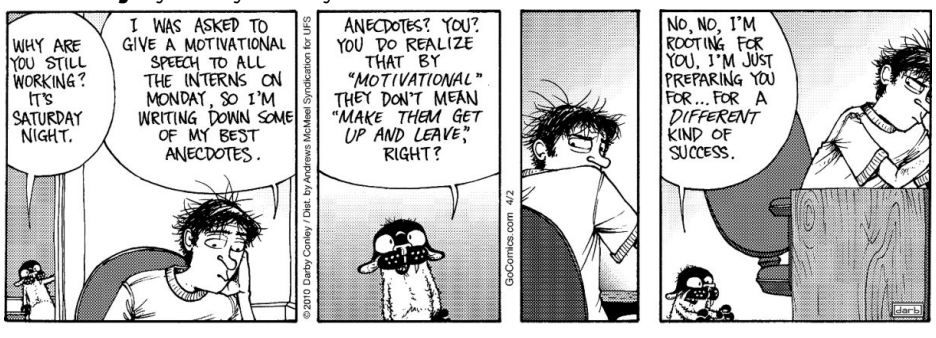
Arctic Circle By Alex Hallatt



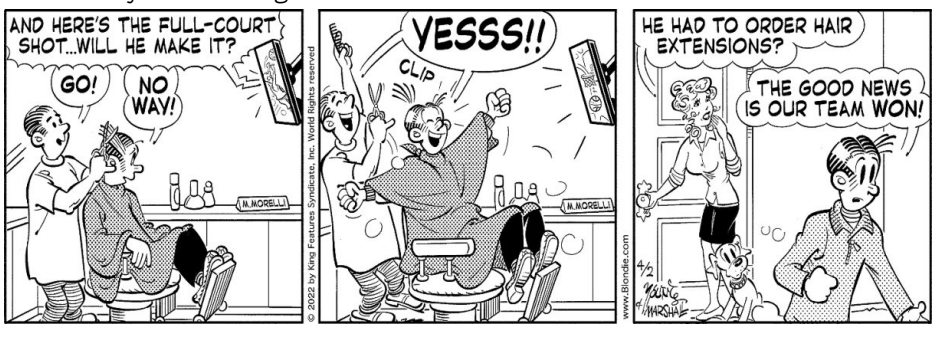
Jump Start By Robb Armstrong



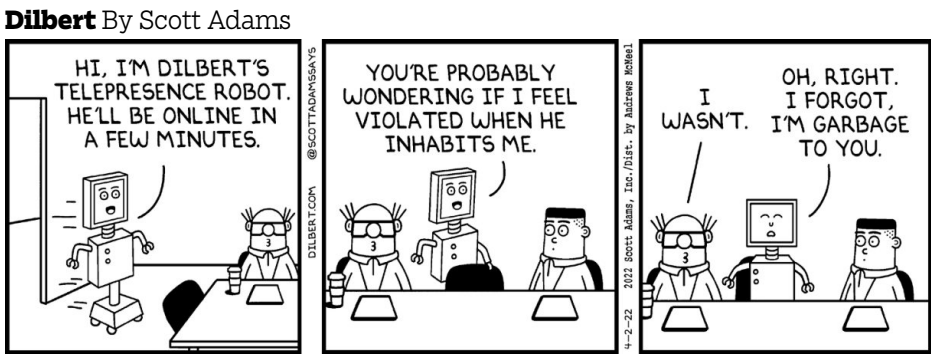
Get Fuzzy By Darby Conley



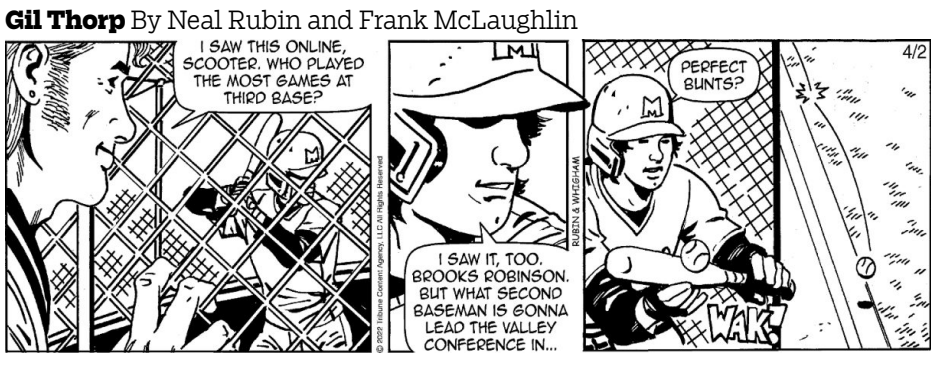
Blondie By Dean Young and John Marshall



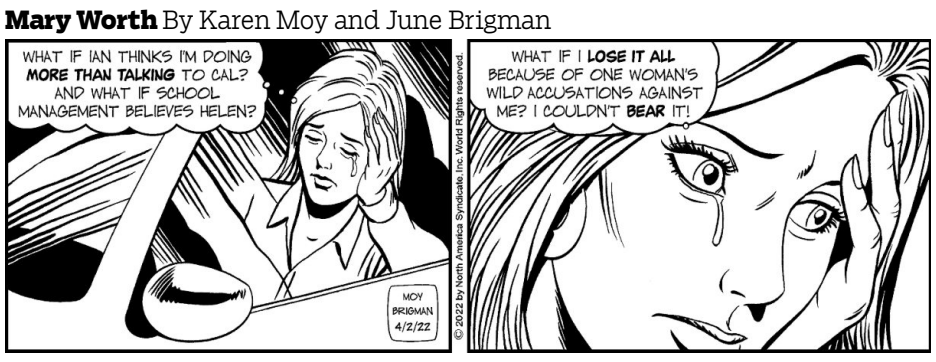
Dilbert By Scott Adams



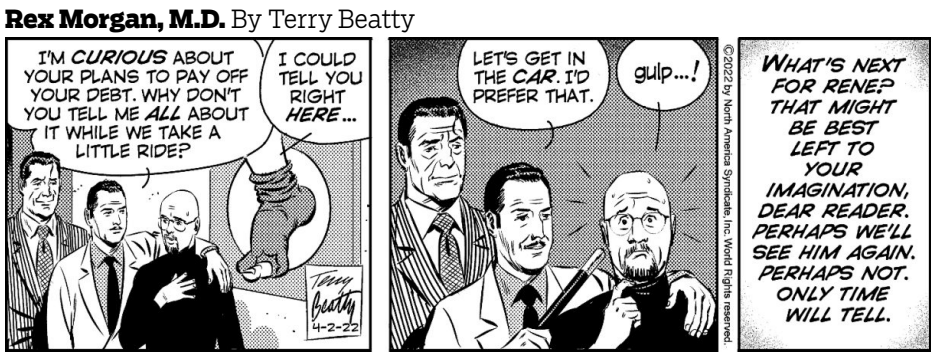
Gil Thorp By Neal Rubin and Frank McLaughlin



Mary Worth By Karen Moy and June Brigman



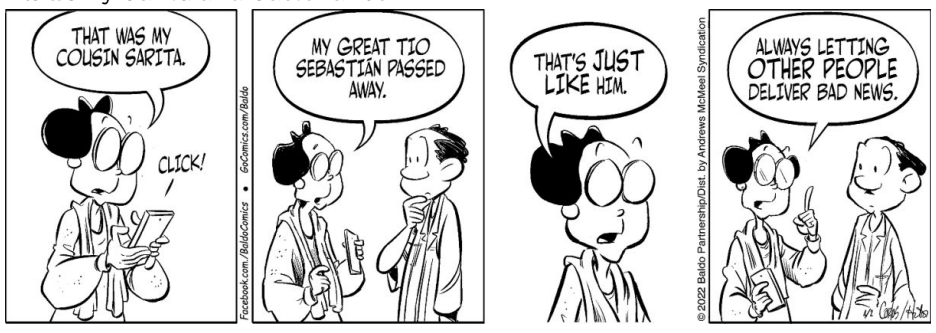
Rex Morgan, M.D. By Terry Beatty



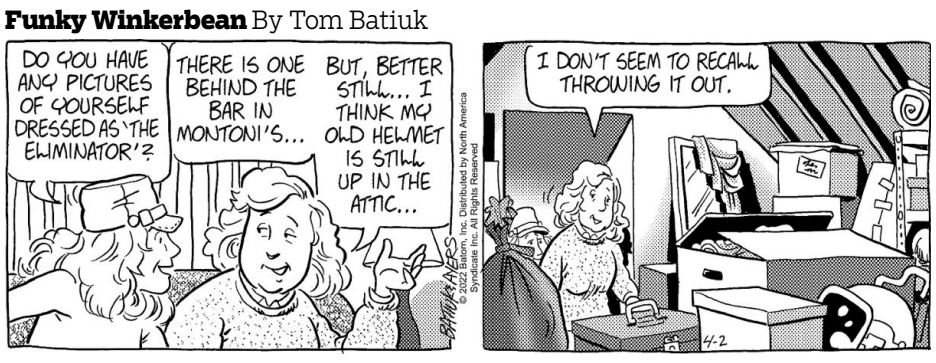
Judge Parker By Woody Wilson and Mike Manley



Baldo By Cantu and Castellanos



Funky Winkerbean By Tom Batiuk



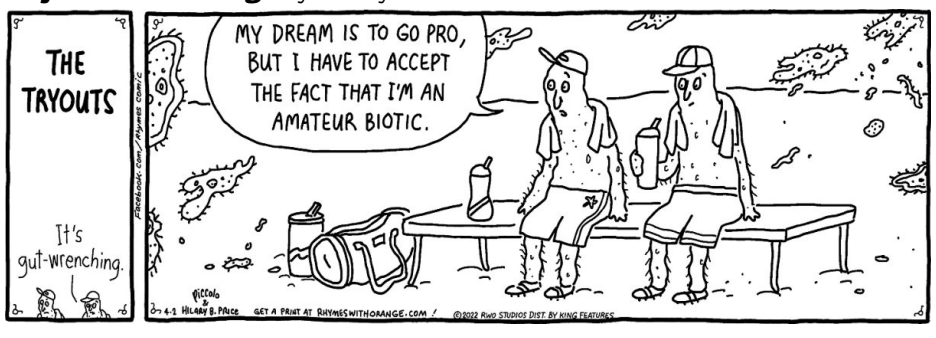
Lio By Mark Tatulli



Wizard Of Id By Johnny Hart and Brant Parker



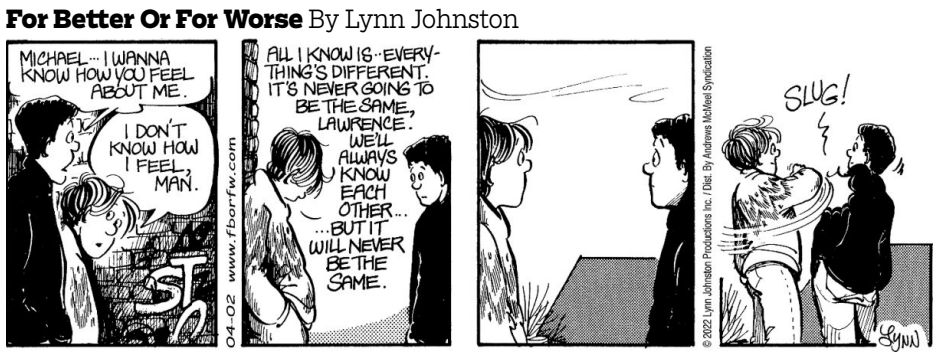
Rhymes With Orange By Hilary Price



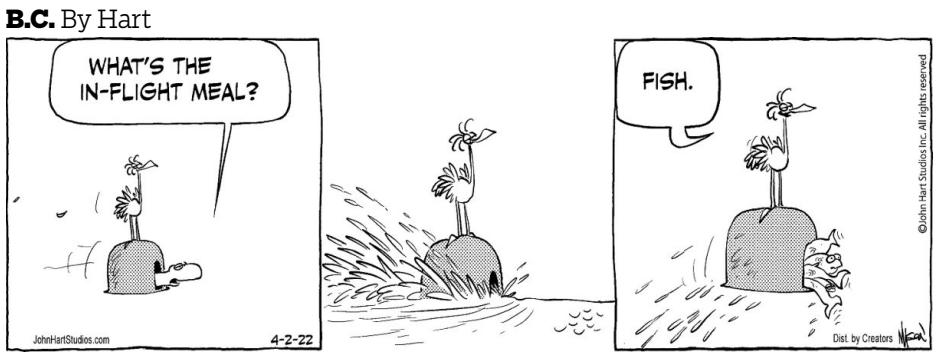
Monty By Jim Meddick



For Better Or For Worse By Lynn Johnston



B.C. By Hart



Beetle Bailey by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker



Hi & Lois By Greg and Brian Walker and Chance Browne

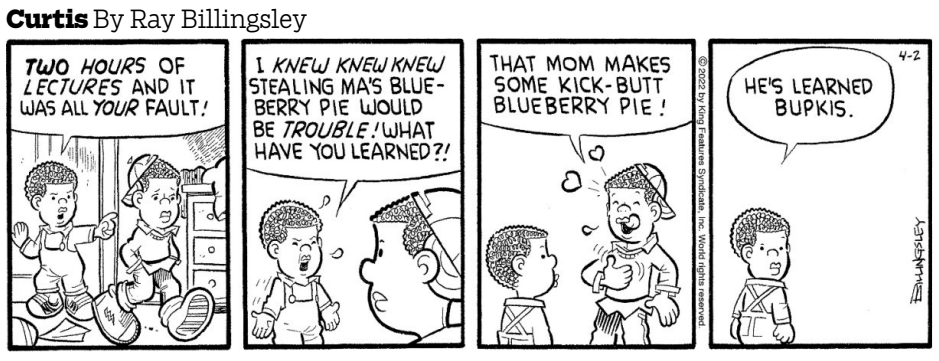


Hagar The Horrible By Chris Browne



Non Sequitur By Wiley Miller

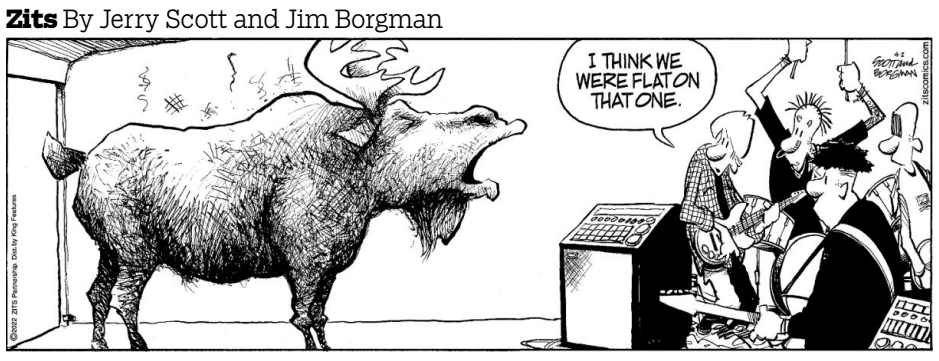
Curtis By Ray Billingsley



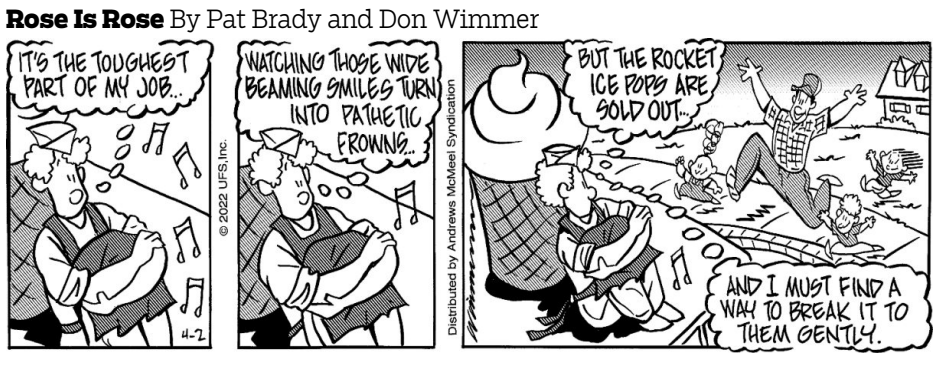
Pickles By Brian Crane



Zits By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



Rose Is Rose By Pat Brady and Don Wimmer



Mother Goose And Grimm By Mike Peters



CROSSWORD

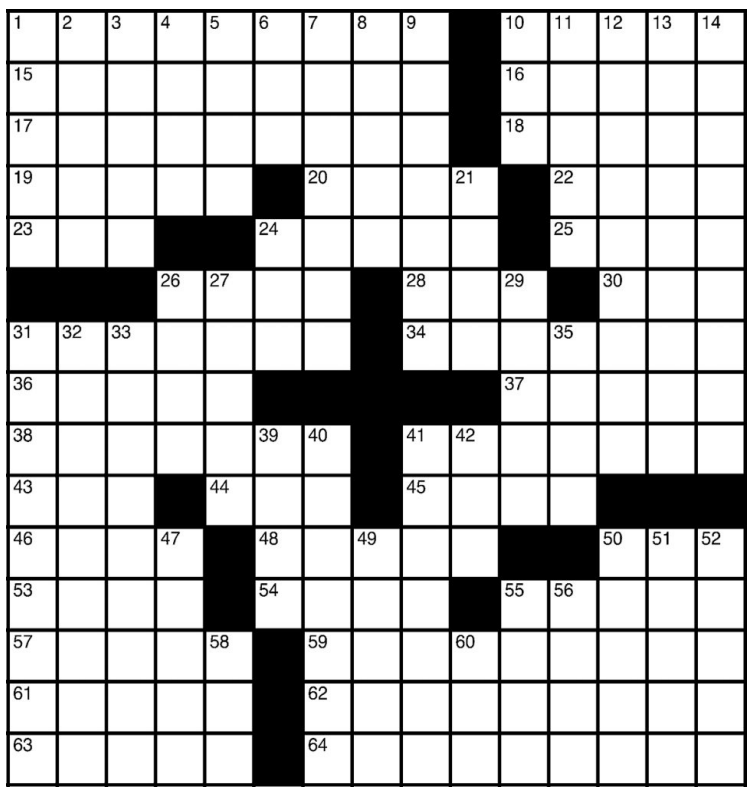
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Across

1 Lose it
10 Malleable
15 One of two in a historic 1869 Utah meeting
16 Desensitize
17 Coloring of some papers?
18 Former birds only found on Mauritius
19 Fluid obstacles
20 In this way
22 French military cap
23 Projection, e.g.: Abbr.
24 Fancy, in slang
25 One-named fashion icon
26 Lunar dark spot
28 1930s J.B. Rhine coinage, briefly
30 Uncanny
31 Branch-dwelling rainforest reptile
34 Eleventh-hour
36 Hardly reputable
37 Defiant admission
38 Proves
41 Kept on riding
43 Lab sound
44 Quote qualifier
45 2021 Pac-12 champs
46 Muck
48 Word before hack or jack
50 "Never to suffer would never to have been blessed" writer
53 French for "unbleached"
54 Spill the beans
55 Herring-bone, e.g.
57 Paris possessive
59 Required network announcement
61 Dwarf, with "over"
62 Presidential carrier that flew with an all-women crew for the first time in 2009
63 Gin berries
64 Intelligence boss

Down

1 Very short putt, in golf lingo
2 Snack brand with a 2012 100th-anniversary "Daily Twist" campaign
3 Wordlessly greet
4 Class division
5 Cartoonist Addams
6 Throw to a tot
7 Horn of Africa country
8 Tokyo brewer
9 Picked up
10 Raise a paddle, perhaps
11 Ramen morsel
12 Uncovered subject
13 Rat (on)
14 "You know it!"
21 Passable
24 Country club employee
26 Social media spreader
27 Tartarus, in Greek myth
29 Group that follows a star?
31 Users of travelers' checks?
32 Back in after going out
33 Dine expectantly?
35 Actor William of "Boy Meets World"
39 Informed advice
40 Great divides
41 Liszt's homeland
42 Had a fast break?
47 Blender button
49 Coming up soon
50 Cab alternative
51 QB protectors, in football lingo
52 Senior
55 Amy's mid-2000s "Weekend Update" partner
56 Burdens
58 TV drama settings
60 South Carolina senator Scott



By Adrian Johnson — Tribune Content Agency 4/2/22

BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER

North dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ K J 4
♥ 9 8 4
♦ 8 7 5 2
♣ J 5 3

WEST
♠ Q 6
♥ 10 3
♦ K Q 10 6 3
♣ K 10 8 6

EAST
♠ A 10 9 8 7 5 3 2
♥ —
♦ A J 9
♣ 7 4

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ A K Q J 7 6 5 2
♦ 4
♣ A Q 9 2

West	East	South
♦ K	♦ A J 9	♥ 7
♣ K 10 8 6	♣ 7 4	♣ A Q 9 2

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
Pass	4 ♠	5 ♥	5 ♠
Pass	Pass	6 ♥	Dble

Opening lead — queen of spades.

Card reading

You sometimes get a lucky break when you're declarer, and when you do, you should try to take full advantage of it. Take this deal where you're in six hearts doubled and West leads the queen of spades. When you play the king from dummy, East plays the ace, which you ruff.

You might think that this is your lucky day because, with a diamond or trump lead, you would have had virtually no chance for the slam. But West led a spade, and now you have a shot to make the contract.

So you cash the A-K of trump, play a trump to dummy's nine and discard your diamond loser on the jack of spades. Next you ruff dummy's last spade before leading two more rounds of trump to produce this position:

North
♦ 8 7
♣ J 5 3

West
♦ K
♣ K 10 8 6

East
♦ A J 9
♣ 7 4

South
♥ 7
♣ A Q 9 2

You now make the key play of a low club to dummy's jack, which wins. Then — backing your judgment that West has been hanging on grimly to four clubs to the K-10 — you lead a diamond from dummy. When East goes up with the ace — which you ruff as West's king falls — you get further assurance that you have analyzed the situation correctly.

So you next lead the queen of clubs, forcing West to win with the king and return a club from his 10-8 into your A-9, and the slam is home.

JUMBLE

BY DAVID HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RYAWE

RUTMS

KNHASE

LPATLE



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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: IMAGE ORBIT NEARLY TRUDGE
Answer: When the grizzly joined the choir, people were nervous about the new — "BEAR-ITONE"

TODAY'S SUDOKU

		9	1			3		8
	3							
8			7		6			
3	2						7	
					5			
	1						5	4
					4			9
				8			2	
2		4	6		9	8		

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit **www.sudoku.org.uk**

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

6	7	3	2	4	1	5	8	9
1	2	8	9	5	6	3	4	7
5	9	4	7	8	3	2	6	1
8	1	5	4	9	2	6	7	3
3	6	2	1	7	8	9	5	4
9	4	7	3	6	5	8	1	2
2	3	6	8	1	4	7	9	5
7	5	1	6	2	9	4	3	8
4	8	9	5	3	7	1	2	6

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

B	L	E	D		S	T	U	D	S		M	B	A	S
R	I	C	E		T	H	R	E	E		C	O	C	A
A	T	O	B		D	E	I	C	E		I	N	T	L
M	E	N	U	S		B	E	A	K			M	I	T
B	R	O	T	H	E	R	L	Y		A	B	O	V	E
L	A	M		E	V	A		S	P	U	R	T	E	D
E	L	I	N		I	V	Y		U	T	E			
		C	O	R	N	E	R	S	T	O	N	E		
			W	A	C		S	A	O		T	M	E	N
W	A	H	I	N	E	S		I	F	S		I	T	A
A	R	E	N	T		I	L	L	F	O	R	G	E	T
M	M	C			A	G	H	A		B	E	R	R	A
P	A	T	E		I	N	A	W	E		B	A	N	S
U	N	I	T		M	E	S	A	S		U	T	A	H
M	I	C	E		S	T	A	Y	S		S	E	L	A

ZIPPY "DEAD WHITE EUROPEAN MALES & ME" BILL GRIFFITH



Hartford Courant

WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR

SPECIAL E-EDITION SECTION
UConn vs. Stanford
Saturday, April 2, 2022

63 58

Where the heart is



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP

Bueckers shines in return to home state, leads UConn to finals

This is why Paige Bueckers came to UConn — and why Geno Auriemma and the Huskies wanted her here. The Minnesota native came through Friday night in Minneapolis, leading UConn to a 63-58 win over Stanford, pushing the Huskies into the championship game for the first time since 2016. "We know everybody in the world doesn't think we're going to win, so we're like, we might as well just prove everybody wrong and prove ourselves right. We've got one more game, we're not satisfied with this," Bueckers said. "We're just trying to win a national championship." **More, Page 2**

COMPLETE COVERAGE INSIDE

Back where they belong
Since the 2016 championship, the Huskies have struggled to make it back to the title game. That all changed Friday night. **Plus:** Box score.
Page 2

Lessons learned
Dom Amore: Turbulent season taught UConn a lot — now it's paying off with a shot at South Carolina.
Plus: Full updated women's bracket.
Page 3

Boston, South Carolina roll
Aliyah Boston had 23 points and 18 rebounds as South Carolina beat Louisville 72-59 to advance to the title game, where it will face UConn.
Sports, behind this section

WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR UCONN 63, STANFORD 58

One more for a dozen



UConn's Olivia Nelson-Ododa (20) and Aaliyah Edwards (3) celebrate afterdefeating Stanford 63-58 in a national semifinal Friday at Target Center in Minneapolis. **ANDY LYONS/GETTY**

UConn grinds out Final Four victory over Stanford; will meet South Carolina for title

By Lori Riley
Hartford Courant

MINNEAPOLIS — The UConn women's basketball team has never lost a national championship game, but the Huskies have had trouble getting there the last few years.

It's been a long drought since 2016 for a program that has won 11 titles.

But Friday night, UConn was back. The Huskies held off defending champion Stanford 63-58 in front of 18,268 at the Target Center to advance to the national championship game Sunday, where the Huskies will face South Carolina at 8 p.m.

Paige Bueckers led UConn (30-5) with 14 points, Evina Westbrook had 12 and Christyn Williams had 10.

"I said the other day, points are hard to come by in this tournament," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "Today was no different. You're going to have to win some other way. You just have to tough it out. You have to rebound the ball better, play defense better, get to the loose balls, make the free throws.

"We did the things we needed to do when we had to do them. We came up big. It was pretty remarkable, to be honest with you."

The UConn seniors — Westbrook, Williams and Olivia Nelson-Ododa — simply didn't want their careers to end. Each struggled in their own way at times, but each also came up with big plays to fuel the win.

"We knew it was going to be a tough one," Westbrook said. "Stanford's a great team. They put up a great fight, it was a great game. But at the same time, in the back of our minds, we knew what we needed to do to win this game and I think our defense was the biggest emphasis for us, especially in that second half."

Westbrook had nine points in the first half. Williams, who struggled to shoot much of the game, going 3 for 13 from the field, hit a 3-pointer at the end of the third quarter and another early in the fourth. Nelson-Ododa, who picked up her fourth foul with 4:22 left in the game, had a big basket and free throws early in the fourth quarter. She ended up with 10 rebounds and eight points.

Williams hit two free throws with 11 seconds left to give UConn a 62-58 lead.

It came down, as it did in the regional final against NC State, to the final minutes of the game. Aaliyah Edwards made two free throws with 1:26 left and Westbrook hit two with 1:12 left to give UConn a 54-48 lead.

But Stanford, led by Haley Jones' 20 points, made it close, with Ashten Prechtel hitting a 3 with 33 seconds left to cut the lead to 58-54 and UConn turned over the ball on a subsequent possession. Jones hit a shot in the lane to cut the lead to 58-56 with 24 seconds left but Azzi Fudd made both of her free throws to give the Huskies a 60-56 lead two seconds later.

The Cardinal countered with a Cameron Brink basket to cut the lead to two once again, 60-58, with 18 seconds remaining before Williams hit her free throws. Prechtel, pressured by the Huskies, aired a 3, and Williams and Edwards made 3 of 4 free throws to ice it.

"We came here on a mission and we're not going to stop until we get what we want," Bueckers said before the game.

"Our seniors are just doing it all," UConn sophomore guard Nika Mühl said. "It's their last year. They just want to win, and we're there to follow them."

It was UConn's 14th straight appearance in the national semifinal. The Huskies have not been able to get past this game since 2016, the last time they won a championship. They lost to Mississippi State (2017), Notre Dame twice (2018, 2019) and Arizona (2021). There was no tournament in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stanford (32-4) had won 24 straight and hadn't lost since Dec. 21, when the Cardinal lost to South Carolina, 65-61.

One of UConn's concerns before the game was that the post players would get in foul trouble and with reserve Dorka Juhász out with a broken wrist suffered in the NC State game, the Huskies wouldn't have depth inside to counter Stanford's height.

But the Huskies managed to hold their own in the rebounding department and actually outrebounded Stanford, 46-37.

At halftime, Nelson-Ododa, Edwards and Fudd had two fouls each. Nelson-Ododa and Edwards each picked up their third in the third quarter.

UConn's offense stagnated in the period and the Huskies didn't score for four minutes. Williams broke the drought with a big 3 and then Nelson-Ododa hit her first basket of the game and the Huskies led 39-37 after three quarters.

Nelson-Ododa opened the fourth with a big basket and was fouled and hit the free throw. Williams then hit another big 3 to give UConn a 45-39 lead. Nelson-Ododa hit two more free throws and UConn led, 47-39.

Both teams had a slow start, with Stanford opening the game shooting 1 for 9 and UConn shooting 2 for 8 and at the 4:39 mark in the first quarter, the Huskies led 4-2. Was it a flashback to the 2010 national championship game when Stanford led 20-12 at halftime? Or just a ragged start by both teams?

It got better. But also, both teams were playing excellent defense and took each other out of their respective comfort zones.

Westbrook came up with a huge block on a Jones' jump shot to end the first quarter as Bueckers' jumper missed at the buzzer and the Huskies led 12-9 after one.

UConn outrebounded Stanford 15-10 in the first quarter.

Westbrook was fired up after the block. She hit her first 3-pointer with 6:25 left in the first half then drained back-to-back 3s, with her third giving UConn its biggest lead of the game, 25-19, with 2:42 left.

Quickly, the Cardinal got back into the game, with Hannah Jump's 3 and a Jones' driving layup and Stanford took the lead, 26-25. But Mühl's putback with 45 seconds left gave UConn a 27-26 lead heading into the locker room at halftime.

Lori Riley can be reached at lriley@courant.com.



UConn's Paige Bueckers and Aaliyah Edwards react after a play in the fourth quarter Friday in Minneapolis. **ANDY LYONS/GETTY**



Bueckers passes around Stanford's Lexie Hull during the second half Friday in Minneapolis. **CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP**

UCONN 63, STANFORD 58

UConn	M	FG	FT	RB	A	PF	PT
Bueckers	34	7-13	0-0	4	5	1	14
Williams	33	3-13	2-2	2	2	0	10
Edwards	19	3-6	3-4	8	2	3	9
Nelson-Ododa	30	2-6	4-5	10	2	4	8
Fudd	27	2-8	4-4	4	0	2	8
Westbrook	31	3-9	3-4	6	2	4	12
Muhl	18	1-2	0-1	8	0	2	2
Ducharme	8	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0
TOTALS		**— 21-57**	**16-20**	**46**	**14**	**16**	**63**

Three-point goals: 5-14, 35.7 (Westbrook 3-5, Williams 2-6, Bueckers 0-1, Fudd 0-2). FG pct.: 36.8. FT pct.: 80.0. Team rebounds: 4. Turnovers: 19(Bueckers 5, Edwards 3, Nelson-Ododa 3, Fudd 3, Westbrook 2, Muhl 2, Williams). Blocks: 2(Bueckers, Westbrook). Steals: 5(Bueckers 2, Williams, Fudd, Muhl).

Stanford	M	FG	FT	RB	A	PF	PT
Jones	40	8-21	4-5	11	3	3	20
Brink	27	6-14	3-4	7	0	4	15
Le. Hull	37	2-12	0-2	2	0	2	4
La. Hull	40	1-4	0-0	9	1	2	3
Wilson	17	0-1	1-2	1	2	0	1
Prechtel	8	2-6	0-0	1	1	0	6
Jump	20	2-5	0-0	1	2	3	5
Bellbi	8	2-3	0-0	1	0	1	4
Emma-Nnopu	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0
Van Gytenbeek	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Irafen	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0
TOTALS		**— 23-66**	**8-13**	**37**	**10**	**16**	**58**

Three-point goals: 4-23, 17.4 (Prechtel 2-6, La. Hull 1-2, Jump 1-4, Brink 0-1, Wilson 0-1, Le. Hull 0-4, Jones 0-5). FG pct.: 34.8. FT pct.: 61.5. Team rebounds: 3. Turnovers: 11(Le. Hull 3, Jones 2, Brink 2, La. Hull 2, Jump 2, Bellbi, Irafen). Blocks: 3(Brink 2, Prechtel). Steals: 11(Brink 3, Le. Hull 3, La. Hull 2, Jones, Wilson, Emma-Nnopu).

UConn	**12**	**15**	**12**	**24**	**— 63**
Stanford	**9**	**17**	**11**	**21**	**— 58**

Officials: Cross, Vaszily, Barlow. Site: 18,268at Target Center, Minneapolis, Minn.

"... in the back of our minds, we knew what we needed to do to win this game and I think our defense was the biggest emphasis for us, especially in that second half."

— Evina Westbrook

WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR UCONN 63, STANFORD 58

UConn navigates turbulence



Dom Amore

Lessons learned from rocky season help lift Huskies to shot at national title

MINNEAPOLIS — Somehow the national semifinals had become this glass ceiling for UConn women's basketball but it couldn't contain this dynasty forever.

This time the Huskies shattered it. Or, at least, cracked it open enough to get back to the national championship game, a place they have not been since 2016.

All the adversity UConn faced this year, the injuries, the tough, physical games they've survived late in the season, were in the memory banks as they had to wrestle this one away from the defending national champions, Stanford, to win 63-58 before 18,268 at the Target Center. The Huskies took control in the fourth quarter and they held on to the lead tenaciously, if at times ineptly.

"I don't know what more I can say about this group than I've been saying," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "But it was pretty remarkable, to be honest with you."

And now they will get another crack at South Carolina, the No. 1 team in the nation, the team that began all their midseason misery in The Bahamas back in November. UConn will go for its 12th championship, its first since a run of four in a row ended in 2016. The Huskies have had better teams, but you might have to go back to the very first title, won on this very Target Center floor in 1995, to identify a more battle-scarred UConn team.

"You get to the Final Four, it's not easy to win either game," Auriemma said. "So I'm always amazed that we've lost in five Final Fours in a row and the program's falling apart.

"As as hard as life has made it on us, we've made it harder on ourselves.

But the hard part is making this run great. Auriemma, asked by the "Pardon The Interruption" guys this week, if he thought about retiring, he said no, he wasn't ready to give up "the suffering" his teams put him through. Auriemma, 68, and probably most fans, suffered and aged 10 years as the Huskies clung inept ly to an 8-point lead with less than 90 seconds left. Two inexplicable turnovers kept the defending champs within striking distance, but his players came through for him at the free throw line, making 15 of 17 in the fourth quarter.

"Sometimes, you have to just enough with what you have," Auriemma said.

If UConn's semifinal losses in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021 held no relevance in in deciding this game, then UConn's 11-0 record in championship games will hold no relevance when they play South Carolina. The Huskies will have to fight and earn the last stop on what has been no magic carpet ride, but a turbulent flight through one storm after another.



UConn's Evina Westbrook and Aaliyah Edwards react after Friday's win over Stanford in the national semifinal in Minneapolis. UConn plays South Carolina on Sunday night for the championship. **ERIC GAY/AP**

Year after year this program labors under the weight of expectations; anything short of a championship is considered a failure. Given the steady flow of top recruits that gravitate to UConn, that's fair. But for this UConn team, what really matters is the journey. Whatever happens Sunday night this team should be admired for what it is.

Paige Bueckers, who grew up eight miles from the arena, drew enough local admirers to make it sound like a home game at times, especially when she hit her pull-up jumpers, 7 of 13 to lead the Huskies with 14 points. The grit came from Olivia Nelson-Ododa and Aaliyah Edwards, who were in and out with foul trouble all night, but combined for 17 points and 18 rebounds. If there were lingering doubts about this team's physical toughness, there shouldn't be. With eight turnovers in the fourth quarter, though, UConn was fortunate to survive that.

"Both teams are fighting for a national championship so everybody was going to lay it on the line, that's basketball," Bueckers said.

The first half was a defensive battle. UConn, using eight players, was getting the worst of it with the whistles, seven fouls called before Stanford got its second. Both teams shot south of 40 percent, but Bueckers hit four short jumpers and Evina Westbrook came off the bench to hit three 3-pointers. The Huskies clung to a 27-26 lead at the half, but had a key defensive weapon, Edwards, and an offensive weapon, Azzi Fudd, sitting with two fouls and ready to return.

Edwards and Nelson-Ododa both picked up their third fouls early in the second half and at that point, Dorka Juhász was sorely needed, but unavailable with her fractured wrist. The game grinded on, screaming for someone to take over. The Huskies clung to the lead still, 39-37, after three.

In the fourth quarter came the killer sequence. Cameron Brink, Stanford's top frontcourt player, picked up her third foul on defense, and her fourth on offense, as Nelson-Ododa hit two free throws to put the Huskies up by eight. Bueckers made a patented midcourt steal and score to keep it at eight with just over five minutes left. Then Fudd, 4-for-4, and her teammates started making critical free throws.

"We just gave it everything we had, and I knew it might not be enough," Auriemma said. "But by some unknown miracle, we're playing Sunday night."

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com



WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR UCONN 63, STANFORD 58



UConn's Paige Bueckers, left, and Nika Muhl celebrate in the second quarter against Stanford during a national semifinal at Target Center on Friday in Minneapolis. Bueckers had 14 points in the win. **ELSA/GETTY**



UConn head coach Geno Auriemma reacts during the first half against Stanford in Minneapolis. Auriemma will coach for his 12th national title on Sunday night. **ERIC GAY/AP**

MINNESOTA STARS



UConn's Evina Westbrook grabs a rebound in front of Stanford's Francesca Belibi during the first half Friday in Minneapolis. Westbrook scored 12 points — including three 3-pointers — in the Huskies' 63-58 victory. **ERIC GAY/AP**



UConn's Paige Bueckers shoots the ball over Lexie Hull (12) of Stanford Cardinal in the first quarter Friday in Minneapolis. **ANDY LYONS/GETTY**



UConn's Nika Muhl and Stanford's Anna Wilson dive for the ball in the first quarter Friday in Minneapolis. **ANDY LYONS/GETTY**



Evina Westbrook, above, right, drives past Stanford's Anna Wilson in the first quarter Friday in Minneapolis. **ANDY LYONS/GETTY**



Stanford's Hannah Jump gets surrounded by UConn's Evina Westbrook, left, and Caroline Ducharme during the first half Friday in Minneapolis The Huskies' defense shut down the Cardinal, who came in as one of the best offensive teams in the country, averaging 73.8 points a game. **CHARLIE NEIBERGALL**



Stanford's Haley Jones is called for a charge into UConn's Aaliyah Edwards during the second half Friday in Minneapolis. Edwards scored nine points. **CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP**

In today's e-edition: Complete coverage of UConn-Stanford

Check out our e-edition for a 4-page, digital-only section covering Friday's Final Four game between UConn and Stanford, which ended too late for our print editions. The section includes game coverage, commentary and analysis by the Courant's Dom Amore and Lori Riley, box score and numerous photos from the matchup.
Go to courant.com and click on the Courant ENewspaper tab.

Motoring Inside

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NCAA TOURNAMENT FINAL FOUR

Villanova, Kansas renew high-stakes history

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Bill Self was wading through old video of Villanova this week, trying to scout a specific action that the Wildcats use on the offensive end of the floor, when the Hall of Fame Kansas coach did something he's avoided the past four years.

Self watched film of the 2018 Final Four.

The one where the Wildcats embarrassed Kansas on their march toward a third national championship.

"I didn't really watch it to try to, you know, have memories," Self said with a grim smile Friday. "I say I watched it — I got through about 12 minutes of it. After that it was very obvious I wasn't going to enjoy it. There are other tapes to watch."

Plenty involving the Jayhawks and Wildcats.

The college basketball powers have become regular NCAA Tournament dates over the years, and their latest their high-stakes showdown comes Saturday night, when they square off again in the national semifinals at the Superdome.

It will be the fourth time since Self and Villanova counterpart Jay Wright took over in the early 2000s that they've matched wits in the Sweet 16 or beyond, and each time, the winner has gone on to claim the national championship.

That includes Self's lone national championship in 2008, the first for Wright in 2016, and that memorable 2018 matchup in San Antonio that folks in Kansas have tried to forget — and that fans in Philadelphia continue to cherish.

Turn to Villanova, Page 4

Men's Final Four at a glance

Villanova vs. Kansas
6:09 p.m., TBS

North Carolina vs. Duke
8:49 p.m., TBS

INSIDE
■ Men's bracket. **Page 5**
■ Capsule previews of both matchups. **Page 5**

NCAA WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT FINAL FOUR

More to do

Geno, other coaches: Tourney experience has improved, but hard work remains

By Dom Amore
Hartford Courant

MINNEAPOLIS — A year ago, in the bubble in San Antonio, Oregon's Sedona Prince used social media to tear down curtains and show the world the inequities between the men's and women's NCAA Tournaments.

The nearly empty weight room symbolized it, and soon a flood of inequities many weren't aware of, amenities, meals, and the fact the "March Madness" branding didn't apply to women.

In 2022, the women's NCAA Tournament, out of the COVID bubble, has made strides, but there is much left to do, the Final Four coaches say.

"I call it, 'hot dogs for the girls and steak for the boys,' " Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer, who led her team against UConn in the semifinals late Friday night at the Target Center, said this week.

The NCAA retained the law firm of Kaplan, Hecker and Fink to do a comprehensive study of its championships, and it brought forth several recommendations. Some of them, such as improved coordination in the planning of both tournaments and branding both as "March Madness" were easy enough to implement.

More aggressive marketing and a system similar to the

Turn to Tourney, Page 4



SIZING THINGS UP

Stanford's Cameron Brink, left, defends against UConn's Olivia Nelson-Ododa during the first quarter of the Women's Final Four semifinal at Target Center on Friday in Minneapolis. The result of the game was not over in time for this edition. Go to **courant.com/sports** or the e-edition special section for complete coverage. **ELSA / GETTY**

SOUTH CAROLINA 72, LOUISVILLE 59

Living up to her rep

Player of the year Boston dominates as South Carolina advances to title game

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Aliyah Boston had 23 points and 18 rebounds to back up her AP National Player of the Year award and carry South Carolina to the NCAA championship game with a 72-59 victory over Louisville in the semifinals on Friday night.

Brea Beal matched her season high with 12 points and helped hold Cardinals star Hailey Van Lith to nine points on 4-for-11 shooting as the Gamecocks (34-2) delivered another stifling defensive performance. The Dawn Staley-led Gamecocks will face the Connecticut-Stanford winner on Sunday night at Target Center.

Destanni Henderson scored 11 points on 3-for-6 shooting from 3-point range and had four assists for South Carolina, which improved to 13-0 this season against AP-ranked opponents.

Emily Engstler led Louisville with 18 points and nine rebounds, as the Cardinals went 1 for 8 from 3-point range and were never able to find a rhythm in the half court against the No. 1 overall seed in this tournament.

Kianna Smith and Olivia Cochran each scored 14 points for the Cardinals (29-5), who were the only team in this Final Four without a title.



Michelle "Mickey" Grace, left, chats with UConn head football coach Jim Mora. Grace has been added to the Huskies staff as an offensive analyst. **UCONN ATHLETICS**

UCONN FOOTBALL

Mora and Co. break down barriers, add Grace as an offensive analyst

By Dom Amore
Hartford Courant

The UConn football program has joined the trend of extending opportunities to women in the sport, naming Mickey Grace to its staff as offensive analyst.

Grace, 29, one of the few women of color to be working full time in college football, had been a defensive assistant, working with linemen at Dartmouth. At UConn she will switch sides of the ball and work with passing game coordinator John Allen.

The move was announced Friday.

"Mickey has a real intellect about her, an ability to see the game in a particular way, which really impressed me," UConn coach Jim Mora said in a statement released by the school. "But more than anything with Mickey, it was just her personality that drew me to her — woman, man, it doesn't matter. It was just the fact that she has such an engaging personality.

"She's got toughness, she's got empathy. She's taught me a ton

Turn to Grace, Page 4



Safety Tip of the Day

Your child should never walk behind a school bus. If your child must cross the street, they should do so in front of the bus and they should walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus before crossing.

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SPORTS

UP NEXT

UConn WBB: NCAA Championship (if necessary) vs. Louisville/South Carolina, Sunday, 8 p.m.
Celtics: Wizards, Sunday, 1 p.m.; at Bulls, Wednesday, 8 p.m.; at Bucks, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Knicks: Cavaliers, Saturday, 1 p.m.; at Magic, Sunday, 6 p.m.; Nets, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Nets: at Hawks, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Rockets, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; at Knicks, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Bruins: Blue Jackets, Saturday, 7 p.m.; at Blue Jackets, Monday, 7 p.m.; at Red Wings, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
Rangers: Flyers, Sunday, 7 p.m.; at Devils, Tuesday, 7 p.m.; Penguins, Thursday, 7 p.m.
Wolf Pack: Syracuse, Saturday, 7 p.m.; at Providence, Monday, 7 p.m.; at Charlotte, Thursday, 7 p.m.
Red Sox: at Yankees, Thursday, 1 p.m.; at Yankees, March 9, 4 p.m.; at Yankees, March 10, 7 p.m.
Yankees: Red Sox, Thursday, 1 p.m.; Red Sox, March 9, 4 p.m.; Red Sox, March 10, 7 p.m.
Mets: at Nationals, Thursday, 4 p.m.; at Nationals, Friday, 7 p.m.; at Nationals, March 9, 7 p.m.

TV/RADIO

BASEBALL
1 p.m.: Phillies at Blue Jays. (Live) SPRTNET
1 p.m.: Texas at Oklahoma. (Live) ESPN2
6 p.m.: NC State at Clemson. (Live) ACC
8 p.m.: Tennessee at Vanderbilt. (Live) SEC
BASKETBALL
10 a.m.: GEICO Nationals, Championship: Teams TBA. (Live) ESPN2
12 p.m.: GEICO Nationals, Championship: Teams TBA. (Live) ESPN
1 p.m.: Cavaliers at Knicks. (Live), MSG
2 p.m.: Greensboro Swa.m.: at Raptors 905. (Live) NBA
3 p.m.: WNIT Basketball Tournament Final. (Live) CBSSN
4 p.m.: 3x3U National Championship: Teams TBA. (Live) ESPNU
6 p.m.: NCAA Tournament First Semifinal: Villanova vs Kansas. (Live) TBS, TNT
7:30 p.m.: Nets at Hawks. (Live), YES
8:30 p.m.: NCAA Tournament Second Semifinal: North Carolina vs Duke. (Live) TBS TNT
BOATING
3 p.m.: Sailing Mubadala United States Sail Grand Prix. (Taped) CBS
GOLF
12 p.m.: Women's Golf Augusta National Amateur. (Live) NBC
1 p.m.: Valero Texas Open, Third Round. (Live) GOLF
3:30 p.m.: Valero Texas Open, Third Round. (Live) NBC
3:30 p.m.: Rapiscan Systems Classic, Second Round. (Live) GOLF
5 p.m.: The Chevron Championship, Third Round. (Live) GOLF
4 a.m.: Ladies Euro Tour Golf Investec South African Women's Open, Final Round. (Same-day Tape) GOLF
HOCKEY
12:30 p.m.: Panthers at Devils. (Live) NHL
3 p.m.: Penguins at Avalanche. (Live) ABC
7 p.m.: Canadiens at Lightning. (Live) SPRTNET, NHL
7 p.m.: Blue Jackets at Bruins. (Live), NESN
10 p.m.: St. Louis Blues at Calgary Flames. (Live) SPRTNET
SOCCER
7:30 a.m.: Premier League Soccer Liverpool vs Watford. (Live) USA
7:55 a.m.: Italian Serie B Soccer Lecce vs Frosinone Calcio. (Live) FSP
9:30 a.m.: Bundesliga Soccer Freiburg vs Bayern Munich. (Live) SPRTNET
10 a.m.: Premier League Soccer Wolverhampton Wanderers vs Aston Villa. (Live) CNBC
10 a.m.: Premier League Soccer Chelsea vs Brentford. (Live) USA
10:10 a.m.: Italian Serie B Soccer Benevento vs AC Pisa 1909. (Live) FSP
12:30 p.m.: Premier League Soccer Manchester United vs Leicester City. (Live) USA
3:30 p.m.: Fútbol MLS Dallas vs Chicago Fire. (Live) UNI
4 p.m.: NWSL Soccer Angel City FC at San Diego Wave FC. (Live) CBS
6:55 p.m.: Fútbol Mexicano Primera División Cruz Azul vs Atlas. (Live) UNI
8:55 p.m.: Fútbol Mexicano Primera División Necaxa vs. América. (Live) UNI
10:55 p.m.: Fútbol Mexicano Primera División Juarez vs Pumas UNAM. (Live) UNI
TENNIS
1 p.m.: ATP/WTA Tennis Miami Open. (Live) TENNIS
3:30 p.m.: ATP/WTA Tennis Miami Open. (Live) TENNIS
VOLLEYBALL
7 p.m.: Athletes Unlimited Volleyball (Live) CBSSN
9 p.m.: Athletes Unlimited Volleyball (Live) CBSSN
10:30 p.m.: Hawaii at Long Beach State. (Live) ESPNU

CELTICS

April Fools – Udoka and Williams stage a fake beef

BOSTON — In the spirit of April Fools' Day, Ime Udoka and Grant Williams caught their teammates with quite the put-on during Friday's shootaround.

The two pretended to go at it with an on-court argument at the Auerbach Center, apparently with convincing results.

"It was a good one," Udoka said. "I got everybody — the coaching staff and all the players. [I] just whispered to Grant — we butted heads a little bit last game, had a few discussions, so this was my way of making it up to him and apologizing in front of the team.

"[We] got in a fake argument, and Grant likes to talk back, so it wasn't unexpected that he had something to say back. But we started chirping, walked toward each other, and I expected a teammate or two or a coach to get in the middle. That would have kind of turned it up, but nobody got in the way.

"So we kept going, and as people started to think it was very serious, we hugged and yelled, 'April Fools!' and fooled the whole gym."

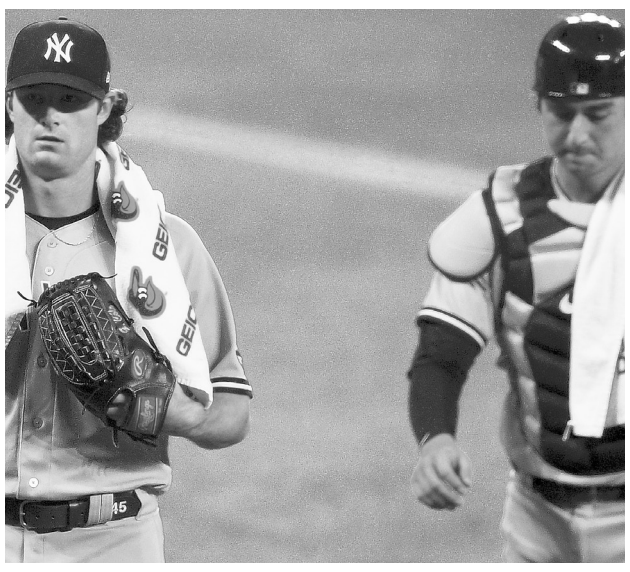
— Boston Herald

REGIONAL DIGEST

Martin impresses at all-star game

UConn senior guard Tyrese Martin led all scorers with 22 points and Huskies teammate R.J. Cole added 13 as the East squad defeated the West, 115-103, in the NABC-Reese's College All-Star Game. The game was held Friday at Caesars Superdome in New Orleans as part of Final Four weekend festivities. Martin scored his game-high 22 on 9-of-17 shooting. ... Zach Bushling delivered the big blow, a three-run double in the fourth to lead the UConn baseball team to a 4-3 win over Kent State in the opener of a three-game nonconference series at Kent, Ohio. Austin Peterson improved to 5-0 on the season, pitching eight innings, allowing three runs on five hits and striking out 10 for the Huskies (18-6).

Wolf Pack fall to Senators, 4-1: Maxim Letunov scored 23 seconds into the game but then the Hartford Wolf Pack proceeded to allow the Belleville Senators four unanswered goals in a 4-1 AHL loss at the XL Center. Hartford (29-25-5-2) now has lost three straight. Jonathan Aspirot tied the game for Belleville at 12:34 of the first and Lassi Thomson provided what turned out to be the winner at 14:55 of the opening period. *— Staff reports*



Yankees starter Gerrit Cole, left, and catcher Kyle Higashioka walk to the dugout before a game against the Orioles on Sept. 5, 2020, in Baltimore. Higashioka says Cole is ready to go in 2022. **NICK WASS / AP**

YANKEES NOTES

Higashioka, who knows Cole's stuff better than anyone, says he's ready

By Kristie Ackert
New York Daily News

LAKELAND, Fla. — Kyle Higashioka just knows it when he sees it.

The Yankees catcher tries to simulate pitch situations the team will need to execute in the regular season. He challenges pitchers to make tough pitches.

Early in spring those pitches usually miss the mark. On Friday, Gerrit Cole made those pitches, worked his way out of some trouble, and his catcher came away feeling confident they are ready for opening day Thursday.

"Like a perfectly done fastball down and away or a backdoor slider or just little specific things that I'll ask him to do, and I know I'm going to need that in the season," Higashioka said. "A lot of times when they're not sharp it's those things that don't happen. But then I know when he's good to go because I'll see him execute those pitches and stuff.

"He looks good to me."

Cole has pitched just five innings in spring training games this year. He made just two starts during this lockout-shortened spring training. The right-hander chose to go with his normal start to spring training ramp-up and do two live batting practices instead of one, then jump into spring training games.

Cole threw 64 pitches Friday with his velocity in the normal 96-97-mph range. He allowed a run on two hits, walked two and struck out five. He included five cutters, which is a new pitch for him this spring.

"I think it looks pretty good," Higashioka said.

Usually starters like to get up to 75 to 80 pitches and then have one last tune-up in spring before the real games start. Aside from not being stretched out for that normal workload the first few turns through the rotation, Cole doesn't see that much of a difference.

"Outside of going three in the first outing, it's really the same progression that I've done for like 10 years," Cole said.

Roster taking shape: The closed-door meetings and bag-packing have begun.

Less than a week away from opening day, the Yankees are whittling down their camp roster and starting to get their big-league team in shape. They have 13 pitchers that are locked into roster spots. That includes Albert Abreu, who manager Aaron Boone said Friday is on the team.

"Albert's out of options, and coupled with coming off what he did last year I feel like he's doing good here for us so far this spring," Boone said.

The Yankees are deciding on those last few spots, whether it be another versatile veteran pitcher like a Manny Banuelos, who can pitch in relief or spot-start, or one of their young prospects like Deivi Garcia or Clarke Schmidt.

They also need to make a decision on a backup catcher since Ben Rortvedt, the catcher acquired in a trade with the Twins, is not going to be ready to break camp.

Rortvedt, who came to the Yankees with a strained oblique, will not be ready for opening day. Boone admitted it is likely the catcher will start the season with minor-league rehab games.

Sevy starting: Luis Severino said he is ready to throw about 60 pitches Saturday, which will be his last spring training start. The right-hander, who has made just 10 appearances over the last three years because of injuries, had been pushed back after feeling soreness in his right arm after his previous start. ... Jordan Montgomery threw four simulated innings back at the Yankees complex Friday. The lefty, who is expected to pitch the third game of the season, may throw on short rest to get one more appearance this spring.

RED SOX NOTES

Sale's rib cage healing, but status remains in question

By Julian McWilliams
Boston Globe

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — There are still a ton of loose ends and some concerns regarding the Red Sox pitching staff less than a week before the regular season begins.

Another MRI on Chris Sale's rib-cage fracture showed that he was "healing," according to manager Alex Cora. Yet that isn't a clear indication the left-hander's injury, suffered five weeks ago in a pre-camp workout, is fully healed. Sale's next step is to begin playing catch.

"I think now it's just a matter of seeing how he feels," Cora said after the Sox's 9-3 loss Friday to the Tampa Bay Rays.

"There's an improvement, and we feel good about it. But obviously we need to see how he reacts to treatment and keep building from there."

There's still not much of a timeline. At the start of spring training the Red Sox said Sale will miss at least three weeks of the regular season.

Nate Eovaldi will be the team's opening-day starter, followed by Nick Pivetta, Tanner Houck, Michael Wacha and likely Rich Hill. Garrett Whitlock is in the mix too, but the team might be better served with him as a multi-inning reliever.

Hill was shellacked Friday, yielding 11 hits and nine runs, all earned.

"Sometimes you ask the question, 'What was going right today?' " Hill said. "And today's question was, 'What was going wrong?' It was everything. I threw the ball like [expletive]."

Bullpen abuzz with questions: Jake Diekman's struggles have carried over from his second half with the Athletics last year. He's allowed seven runs and two homers in just 2⅔ innings this spring.

Diekman is a veteran, and often spring isn't a good barometer for what a player can accomplish when it actually matters. Nonetheless, given his nosedive last year it is something to watch.

Josh Taylor (back) won't be ready for the start of the season. Hansel Robles, whom the Sox signed to a minor-league deal with an invite to spring training, has missed nearly all of it due to visa issues.

He arrived Thursday and will throw at Fenway South on Saturday. The team won't rule out Robles being ready for the start of the season.

Good news on Paxton: Left-hander James Paxton, acquired just ahead of the lockout and in recovery from Tommy John surgery last April, is ramping up his workload throwing short bullpens. Sale returned from Tommy John in 16 months, and Cora said Paxton is ahead of where Sale was. The Sox are still determining whether Paxton will stay behind and go through his progression during extended spring training or join the team, but Cora did acknowledge having a veteran like him around during the season (even though he's not able to pitch) is a plus . . . The Sox will have another round of cuts Saturday. There will be another cut day before the end of spring training that will trim the Sox's roster down to 28. ... Left-hander Derek Holland, Robles and first baseman Travis Shaw can all opt out of minor-league deals and become free agents Saturday if they aren't added to the team's 40-man roster. . . . The Red Sox released seven minor-leaguers per MILB.com, among them outfielder Cole Brannen (a second-round pick in 2017 who hit .152 over four seasons) and right-hander Zach Schellenger (a sixth-round selection in 2017 from Seton Hall who showed promise but stalled at Double A).



The Red Sox's Chris Sale, seen pitching in a 2021 game against the Twins, is still dealing with a rib-cage fracture suffered five weeks ago. **ADAM GLANZMAN / GETTY**

METS

DeGrom shut down from throwing for 4 weeks

By Deesha Thosar
New York Daily News

JUPITER, Fla. — Jacob deGrom will not make his Opening Day start, and several more after that.

DeGrom's MRI revealed "a stress reaction on his scapula that has caused inflammation in the area," the Mets announced on Friday.

He has been shut down from throwing for up to four weeks, then will be re-evaluated with another MRI.

"Again, it's really hard to say," Mets GM Billy Eppler said on Friday when asked when he realistically expects deGrom to be pitching a major-league game. "MRIs guide you, but you treat patients. There could be situations where we manipulate the shoulder a little bit, move him around, test him. If he doesn't present with any kind of symptom at that time and everything seems to go well, and it goes well for a number of days in a row, then maybe you're looking at a little bit earlier."

Based on that timeline, and the amount of days it will take for the Mets ace to build back up, deGrom's best-case scenario is missing anywhere from 7-8 weeks of the regular season. He last pitched in an MLB game on July 7, 2021 and missed the entire second half of the season with right elbow inflammation. In addition to the elbow injury, deGrom also dealt with back stiffness, right lat and side tightness, right flexor tendinitis and right shoulder soreness in 2021.

DeGrom, a two-time Cy Young winner and widely respected as the best pitcher in baseball, recorded a 1.08 ERA in 15 starts last season. Since his 2019 Cy Young season, he's made 27 starts and pitched 160 innings combined over the past two years.

"I mean, he's disappointed," Eppler said of deGrom's reaction. "We're disappointed. Everybody is sharing in the disappointment right now. Nobody is immune to that."

Max Scherzer is expected to take the hill against the Nationals on Opening Day in Washington, D.C. on Thursday. Eppler said he will speak to manager Buck Showalter before officially naming Scherzer the Mets' new Opening Day starter. Showalter, too, was hesitant to immediately confirm Scherzer will replace deGrom for the first game of the season. Maybe the front office has another idea planned. But likely, Eppler and Showalter prefer to first speak with Scherzer and other pitchers before discussing upcoming plans with reporters.

"We're going to do everything we can to support him in every which way we can," Eppler said. "Jake's a resilient person. With time, things heal. And so this is another situation where some time will have him healed and we'll get him back on the hill."



SCOREBOARD

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	W	L	PCT	GB
x-Boston	47	30	.610	—
Philadelphia	46	30	.605	½
Toronto	45	32	.584	2
Brooklyn	40	37	.519	7
New York	34	43	.442	13

SOUTHEAST	W	L	PCT	GB
y-Miami	49	28	.636	—
Atlanta	40	37	.519	9
Charlotte	40	37	.519	9
Washington	34	43	.442	15
Orlando	20	58	.256	29 ½

CENTRAL	W	L	PCT	GB
x-Milwaukee	48	28	.632	—
Chicago	45	32	.584	3 ½
Cleveland	42	35	.545	6 ½
Indiana	25	52	.325	23 ½
Detroit	21	56	.273	27 ½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST	W	L	PCT	GB
y-Memphis	54	23	.701	—
x-Dallas	48	30	.615	6 ½
New Orleans	33	43	.434	20 ½
San Antonio	31	45	.408	22 ½
Houston	20	57	.260	34

NORTHWEST	W	L	PCT	GB
Utah	46	31	.597	—
Denver	46	31	.597	—
Minnesota	43	34	.558	3
Portland	27	49	.355	18 ½
Oklahoma City	22	54	.289	23 ½

PACIFIC	W	L	PCT	GB
z-Phoenix	62	14	.816	—
Golden State	48	29	.623	14 ½
L.A. Clippers	37	40	.481	25 ½
L.A. Lakers	31	45	.408	31
Sacramento	28	49	.364	34 ½

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division
z-clinched conference

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
Toronto 102, Orlando 89
Washington 135, Dallas 103
Indiana at Boston, late
Detroit at Oklahoma City, late
L.A. Clippers at Milwaukee, late
Phoenix at Memphis, late
Sacramento at Houston, late
Portland at San Antonio, late
Minnesota at Denver, late
New Orleans at L.A. Lakers, late

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Charlotte at Philadelphia, 12:30p.m.
Cleveland at New York, 1p.m.
Brooklyn at Atlanta, 7:30p.m.
Miami at Chicago, 8p.m.
Utah at Golden State, 8:30p.m.

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Dallas at Milwaukee, 1p.m.
Washington at Boston, 1p.m.
Denver at L.A. Lakers, 3:30p.m.
Detroit at Indiana, 5p.m.
New York at Orlando, 6p.m.
Philadelphia at Cleveland, 6p.m.
Miami at Toronto, 7p.m.
Minnesota at Houston, 7p.m.
Phoenix at Oklahoma City, 7p.m.
Portland at San Antonio, 7p.m.
Golden State at Sacramento, 9p.m.
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers, 9:30p.m.

THURSDAY'S RESULTS
Detroit 102, Philadelphia 94
Atlanta 131, Cleveland 107
Milwaukee 120, Brooklyn 119(OT)
Chicago 135, L.A. Clippers 130(OT)
Utah 122, L.A. Lakers 109

NBA INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

Through Thursday

SCORING	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
GAnttknmpo, MIL	63	650	528	1897	30.1
James, LAL	55	627	245	1657	30.1
Embiid, PHI	63	600	605	1890	30.0
Young, ATL	71	661	462	2000	28.2
Doncic, DAL	60	593	319	1688	28.1
DeRozan, CHI	72	739	493	2019	28.0
Morant, MEM	56	573	311	1543	27.6
Tatum, BOS	72	673	381	1946	27.0
Jokic, DEN	70	701	355	1852	26.5
Booker, PHO	65	620	304	1716	26.4
Mitchell, UTA	64	596	251	1669	26.1
Curry, GS	64	535	275	1630	25.5
LaVine, CHI	64	543	308	1572	24.6
G-Alexander, OKC	56	477	328	1371	24.5
Towns, MIN	70	602	368	1711	24.4

REBOUNDS	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Gobert, UTA	61	222	670	892	14.62
Jokic, DEN	70	195	754	949	13.56
Capela, ATL	69	257	560	817	11.84
GAnttknmpo, MIL	63	126	609	735	11.67
Valanciunas, NO	70	219	594	813	11.61
Embiid, PHI	63	133	589	722	11.46
Vucevic, CHI	69	137	639	776	11.25
Nurkic, POR	56	167	452	619	11.05
Allen, CLE	56	192	410	602	10.75
Carter, ORL	62	139	509	648	10.45
Ayton, PHO	55	141	417	558	10.15
Wood, HOU	68	110	576	686	10.09
Adams, MEM	73	340	388	728	9.97
Randle, NY	72	125	591	716	9.94
Towns, MIN	70	183	501	684	9.77
Williams, BOS	61	238	350	588	9.64

ASSISTS	G	AST	AVG
Paul, PHO	61	654	10.7
Young, ATL	71	682	9.6
Murray, SA	67	620	9.3
Garland, CLE	63	545	8.7
Doncic, DAL	60	517	8.6
Jokic, DEN	70	560	8.0
Ball, CHA	70	525	7.5
Lowry, MIA	60	451	7.5
Westbrook, LAL	75	535	7.1
Russell, MIN	62	436	7.0
Holiday, MIL	62	418	6.7
Morant, MEM	56	375	6.7
VanVleet, TOR	62	415	6.7

TENNIS

MIAMI OPEN
at Hard Rock Stadium, Miami Gardens, Fla., hardcourt outdoors
MEN'S SINGLES, SEMIFINALS
#6Casper Ruud d.
Francisco Cerundolo, 6-4, 6-1.
#14 Carlos Alcaraz d.
#8 Hubert Hurkacz, 7-6(5), 7-6(2).
SATURDAY WOMEN'S FINAL
#2 Iga Swiatek vs.
Naomi Osaka, 11a.m.

ANDALUCIA OPEN
At Club de Tennis Puente Romano, Marbella, Spain, outdoors-hard
MEN'S SINGLES, QUARTERFINALS
#6Jaume Munar d.
#2Alex Molcan, 7-6, 6-2.
#3 Pablo Andujar d.
Chun-hsin Tseng, 6-2, 6-4.
#4 Jiri Vesely d.
#5 Roberto Carballes Baena, 6-2, 6-4.
Pedro Cachin d.
Philipp Kohlschreiber, 7-6, 6-2.
WOMEN'S SINGLES, QUARTERFINALS
#1Danka Kovinic d.
#7Martina Trevisan, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.
#3Mayar Sherif d.
#8 Anna-Karolina Schmiedlova, 6-2, 6-2.
Tamara Korpatsch d.
#6Panna Udvardy, 7-6(6), 6-3.
Oceane Dodin d.
Rebeka Masarova, 6-4, 6-1.

ODDS

COLLEGE BASKETBALL FAVORITE	LINE	SATURDAY UNDERDOG
Kansas	4	Villanova
Duke	4	North Carolina

NBA FAVORITE	LINE	O/U	SATURDAY UNDERDOG
at Philadelphia	6½	(231½)	Charlotte
Cleveland	2	(214½)	at New York
Brooklyn	1	(242)	at Atlanta
Miami	1½	(220½)	at Chicago
Utah	1½	(219)	at Golden St.

NHL FAVORITE	LINE	SATURDAY UNDERDOG	Line
Florida	-250	at New Jersey	+202
at Colorado	Off	Pittsburgh	Off
at Winnipeg	-120	Los Angeles	+100
Toronto	-260	at Philadelphia	+210
at Tampa Bay	-520	Montreal	+385
at Carolina	Off	Minnesota	Off
at Boston	Off	Columbus	Off
at Calgary	Off	St. Louis	Off
Dallas	-150	at San Jose	+125

For the latest odds, go to FanDuel Sportsbook, https://sportsbook.fanduel.com/

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA
Florida	67	46	15	6	98	275	195
Tampa Bay	67	43	18	6	92	224	187
Toronto	67	43	19	5	91	252	204
Boston	67	42	20	5	89	212	181
Detroit	67	26	32	9	61	193	258
Buffalo	69	24	33	11	61	190	243
Ottawa	66	23	37	6	52	171	217
Montreal	68	18	39	11	47	173	258
METRO	**GP**	**W**	**L**	**OT**	**PTS**	**GF**	**GA**
Carolina	68	45	15	8	98	229	161
N.Y. Rangers	69	44	20	5	93	211	181
Pittsburgh	69	41	18	10	92	231	185
Washington	68	37	21	10	84	225	197
N.Y. Islanders	67	31	27	9	71	186	183
Columbus	68	32	31	5	69	221	255
Philadelphia	67	21	35	11	53	172	237
New Jersey	67	24	38	5	53	204	247

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA
Colorado	68	48	14	6	102	259	187
Minnesota	66	41	20	5	87	244	207
St. Louis	66	37	20	9	83	234	191
Nashville	68	39	25	4	82	224	199
Dallas	66	38	25	3	79	195	196
Winnipeg	69	33	26	10	76	215	216
Chicago	69	24	35	10	58	186	244
Arizona	67	21	41	5	47	173	242
PACIFIC	**GP**	**W**	**L**	**OT**	**PTS**	**GF**	**GA**
Calgary	67	40	18	9	89	234	165
Los Angeles	70	37	23	10	84	202	200
Edmonton	68	38	25	5	81	237	219
Vegas	69	37	28	4	78	219	206
Vancouver	69	32	28	9	73	196	199
San Jose	67	29	30	8	66	177	213
Anaheim	69	27	30	12	66	193	224
Seattle	67	21	40	6	48	176	236

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
N.Y. Islanders 3, N.Y. Rangers 0
Buffalo 4, Nashville 3
Tampa Bay 5, Chicago 2
Ottawa at Detroit, late
St. Louis at Edmonton, late
Vegas at Seattle, late
Anaheim at Arizona, late
SATURDAY'S GAMES
Florida at New Jersey, 12:30p.m.
Pittsburgh at Colorado, 3p.m.
Columbus at Boston, 7p.m.
Los Angeles at Winnipeg, 7p.m.
Minnesota at Carolina, 7p.m.
Montreal at Tampa Bay, 7p.m.
Toronto at Philadelphia, 7p.m.
St. Louis at Calgary, 10p.m.
Dallas at San Jose, 10:30p.m.
SUNDAY'S GAMES
Detroit at Ottawa, 1p.m.
Florida at Buffalo, 1p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at New Jersey, 4p.m.
Arizona at Chicago, 7p.m.
Minnesota at Washington, 7p.m.
Philadelphia at N.Y. Rangers, 7p.m.
Vegas at Vancouver, 7p.m.
Edmonton at Anaheim, 8p.m.
Dallas at Seattle, 9p.m.
THURSDAY'S RESULTS
N.Y. Islanders 5, Columbus 2
Carolina 4, Montreal 0
Florida 4, Chicago 0
Toronto 7, Winnipeg 3
Boston 8, New Jersey 1
Pittsburgh 4, Minnesota 3(OT)
Colorado 4, San Jose 2
Los Angeles 3, Calgary 2(SO)
Dallas 3, Anaheim 2(OT)

BASEBALL

SPRING TRAINING

AMERICAN LEAGUE	W	L	Pct.
Los Angeles	9	4	.692
Houston	8	4	.667
Kansas City	8	4	.667
Boston	9	6	.600
Baltimore	7	5	.583
Texas	7	5	.583
Toronto	7	5	.583
Seattle	6	5	.545
Chicago	8	7	.533
Cleveland	6	7	.462
New York	6	8	.429
Detroit	5	7	.417
Tampa Bay	5	7	.417
Minnesota	6	9	.400
Oakland	4	9	.308
NATIONAL LEAGUE	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**
Miami	7	5	.583
St. Louis	7	5	.583
Chicago	8	6	.571
Atlanta	6	5	.545
Philadelphia	7	6	.538
Arizona	8	7	.533
New York	6	6	.500
Pittsburgh	5	5	.500
Cincinnati	6	7	.462
San Francisco	6	7	.462
San Diego	5	6	.455
Milwaukee	5	7	.417
Los Angeles	4	6	.400
Colorado	5	8	.385
Washington	2	10	.167

Ties not included in standings

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
Baltimore 3, Philadelphia 2
Houston 2, Miami 1
Minnesota 8, Atlanta 7
Tampa Bay 9, Boston 3
N.Y. Yankees 6, Detroit 2
Toronto 6, Pittsburgh 6
St. Louis 7, N.Y. Mets 2
Texas 7, San Francisco 7
Arizona (ss) 6, Chicago Cubs (ss) 0
Milwaukee 5, Chicago Cubs (ss) 3
Oakland 12, Chicago White Sox 4
L.A. Angels 7, Cincinnati 6
Arizona (ss) vs. Cleveland, late
Kansas City vs. San Diego, late
Seattle vs. Colorado, late
SATURDAY'S GAMES
Pittsburgh vs. Boston, 1:05p.m.
Baltimore vs. Detroit, 1:05p.m.
Atlanta vs. N.Y. Yankees, 1:05p.m.
Minnesota vs. Tampa Bay, 1:05p.m.
Philadelphia vs. Toronto, 1:07p.m.
L.A. Angels vs. Chicago Cubs, 3:05p.m.
San Francisco vs. L.A. Dodgers, 3:05 p.m.
Colorado vs. Oakland, 4:05p.m.
St. Louis vs. Houston, 6:05p.m.
Washington vs. Miami, 6:40p.m.
San Diego vs. Cincinnati, 9:05p.m.
Cleveland vs. Texas, 9:05p.m.
Chicago White Sox vs. Arizona, 9:10 p.m.
Milwaukee vs. Seattle, 9:40p.m.
SUNDAY'S GAMES
Boston vs. Atlanta, 1:05p.m.
Baltimore vs. Minnesota, 1:05p.m.
Detroit vs. Philadelphia, 1:05wp.m.
Tampa Bay vs. Pittsburgh, 1:05p.m.
Houston vs. Washington, 1:05p.m.
N.Y. Yankees vs. Toronto, 1:07p.m.
Miami vs. N.Y. Mets, 1:10p.m.
Colorado vs. Chicago White Sox, 4:05 p.m.
San Diego vs. Oakland, 4:05p.m.
Seattle vs. Kansas City, 4:05p.m.
Cincinnati vs. Arizona, 4:10p.m.
Texas vs. Milwaukee, 4:10p.m.
Chicago Cubs vs. Cleveland, 9:05p.m.
L.A. Dodgers vs. L.A. Angels, 9:05p.m.

NFL

FIRST-ROUND DRAFT ORDER
Draft: April 28-30 in Paradise, Nev.

PK	TEAM	REC	SOS
1	Jacksonville Jaguars	3–14	.512
2	Detroit Lions	3–13–1	.528
3	Houston Texans	4–13	.498
4	N.Y. Jets	4–13	.512
5	N.Y. Giants	4–13	.536
6	Carolina Panthers	5–12	.509
7	N.Y. Giants (from Chi)	6–11	.524
8	Atlanta Falcons	7–10	.472
9	Seattle (from Den)	7–10	.484
10	N.Y. Jets (from Sea)	7–10	.519
11	Washington Comm.	7–10	.529
12	Minnesota Vikings	8–9	.507
13	Houston (from Cle)	8–9	.514
14	Baltimore Ravens	8–9	.531
15	Philadelphia (from Mia)	9–8	.464
16	Philadelphia (from Ind)	9–8	.495
17	L.A. Chargers	9–8	.510
18	New Orleans Saints	9–8	.512
19	Philadelphia Eagles	9–8	.469
20	Pittsburgh Steelers	9–7–1	.521
21	New England Patriots	10–7	.481
22	Green Bay (from LV)	10–7	.510
23	Arizona Cardinals	11–6	.490
24	Dallas Cowboys	12–5	.488
25	Buffalo Bills	11–6	.472
26	Tennessee Titans	12–5	.472
27	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	13–4	.467
28	Green Bay Packers	13–4	.479
29	KC (from SF via Mia)	10–7	.500
30	Kansas City Chiefs	12–5	.538
31	Cincinnati Bengals	10–7	.472
32	Detroit (from LA Rams)	12–5	.483

Records, strength of schedule are for team that originally owned pick

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

THE BASKETBALL CLASSIC
FRIDAY'S CHAMPIONSHIP
Fresno State 85, Coastal Carolina 74

MEN'S NIT
Madison Square Garden, New York City
THURSDAY'S CHAMPIONSHIP
Xavier 73, Texas A&M 72
MVP: Colby Jones, Xavier, 21 pts, 4 reb

WOMEN'S NCAA TOURNAMENT
FINAL FOUR
Target Center, Minneapolis
FRIDAY'S NATIONAL SEMIFINALS
South Carolina 72, Louisville 59
Stanford vs. UConn, late
SUNDAY'S NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Semifinal winners, 8p.m.

WOMEN'S NIT
Francis S. Levien Gymnasium, New York
Saturday's Championship
Seton Hall vs. South Dakota State, 3 p.m.
THURSDAY'S SEMIFINALS
Seton Hall 74, Middle Tennessee 73
South Dakota St. 62, UCLA 59

SOCCER

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

EASTERN	W	L	T	PT	GF	GA
Philadelphia	3	0	1	10	7	2
Columbus	2	0	2	8	10	5
Chicago	2	0	2	8	5	1
Orlando City	2	1	2	8	5	3
N.Y. Red Bulls	2	1	1	7	8	4
Atlanta	2	1	1	7	8	8
D.C. United	2	2	0	6	5	4
Charlotte FC	2	3	0	6	6	7
Cincinnati	2	3	0	6	5	10
New York City FC	1	2	1	4	4	4
New England	1	2	1	4	6	8
Toronto FC	1	2	1	4	5	8
CF Montréal	0	3	1	1	5	11
Inter Miami CF	0	3	1	1	2	10
WESTERN	**W**	**L**	**T**	**PT**	**GF**	**GA**
Los Angeles FC	3	0	1	10	9	2
Real Salt Lake	3	1	1	10	6	4
Minnesota United	2	0	2	8	4	2
Austin FC	2	1	1	7	11	3
FC Dallas	2	1	1	7	7	3
Colorado	2	1	1	7	6	4
LA Galaxy	2	2	0	6	4	4
Kansas City	2	3	0	6	4	8
Portland	1	1	3	6	6	8
Houston	1	1	2	5	3	3
Seattle	1	2	1	4	4	5
Nashville	1	2	1	4	3	5
San Jose	0	3	1	1	4	9
Vancouver	0	3	1	1	2	9

Three points for win, one point for tie.

SATURDAY'S MATCHES
FC Dallas at Chicago, 3:30p.m.
CF Montréal at Cincinnati, 4p.m.
New York City FC at Toronto FC, 4p.m.
Nashville at Columbus, 6p.m.
Atlanta at D.C. United, 7:30p.m.
New York at New England, 7:30p.m.
Los Angeles FC at Orlando City, 7:30 p.m.
Charlotte FC at Philadelphia, 7:30p.m.
Austin FC at San Jose, 7:30p.m.
Houston at Miami, 8p.m.
Seattle at Minnesota, 8p.m.
Sporting KC at Vancouver, 8p.m.
Real Salt Lake at Colorado, 9p.m.

SUNDAY'S MATCH
LA Galaxy at Portland, 4:30p.m.

NWSL CHALLENGE CUP
SATURDAY'S MATCHES
Louisville at Kansas City, 3p.m.
Angel City FC at San Diego FC, 4p.m.
Houston at Chicago, 8p.m.
OL Reign at Portland, 10p.m.

SUNDAY'S MATCHES
North Carolina at Gotham FC, 3p.m.
Orlando at Washington, 4p.m.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

CLUB	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
Man City	29	22	4	3	68	18	70
Liverpool	29	21	6	2	75	20	69
Chelsea	28	17	8	3	57	19	59
Arsenal	28	17	3	8	44	31	54
Tottenham	29	16	3	10	47	36	51
Man United	29	14	8	7	48	40	50
West Ham	30	14	6	10	49	39	48
Wolverhampton	30	14	4	12	31	26	46
Aston Villa	29	11	3	15	41	40	36
Leicester	27	10	6	11	42	46	36
Southampton	29	8	11	10	36	45	35
Crystal Palace	29	7	13	9	39	38	34
Brighton	29	7	12	10	26	36	33
Newcastle	29	7	10	12	32	49	31
Brentford	30	8	6	16	33	47	30
Leeds	30	7	8	15	34	67	29
Everton	27	7	4	16	29	47	25
Watford	29	6	4	19	29	55	22
Burnley	27	3	12	12	22	38	21
Norwich	29	4	5	20	18	63	17

SATURDAY'S MATCHES
Liverpool vs. Watford, 7:30a.m.
Brighton vs. Norwich, 10a.m.
Burnley vs. Man City, 10a.m.
Chelsea vs. Brentford, 10a.m.
Leeds vs. Southampton, 10a.m.
Wolverhampton vs. Aston Villa, 10a.m.
Man United vs. Leicester, 12:30p.m.

SUNDAY'S MATCHES
West Ham vs. Everton, 9a.m.
Tottenham vs. Newcastle, 11:30a.m.

MONDAY'S MATCH
Crystal Palace vs. Arsenal, 3p.m.

U.S. WOMEN'S SCHEDULE
April 9: vs. Uzbekistan, at Lower.com Field, Columbus, Ohio, 5:30 p.m.
April 12: vs. Uzbekistan, at Subaru Park, Chester, Pa., 6 p.m.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
QUARTERFINAL KNOCKOUT PHASE
First, second leg: April 5-13
Atlético Madrid vs. Man City
Liverpool vs. Benfica
First, second leg: April 6-12
Bayern Munich vs. Villarreal
Real Madrid vs. Chelsea

WORLD CUP DRAW
GROUP A
Ecuador
Qatar
Netherlands
Senegal
GROUP B
England
Iran
United States
Wales, Scotland or Ukraine
GROUP C
Argentina
Mexico
Poland
Saudi Arabia
GROUP D
Denmark
France
Tunisia
Peru, Australia or United Arab Emirates
GROUP E
Germany
Japan
Spain
Costa Rica or New Zealand
GROUP F
Belgium
Canada
Croatia
Morocco
GROUP G
Brazil
Cameroon
Serbia
Switzerland
GROUP H
Ghana
Portugal
South Korea
Uruguay

AUTO RACING

NASCAR CUP DRIVER POINT STANDINGS

DRIVER	W	T5	T10	PTS
Chase Elliott	0	1	4	208
Ryan Blaney	0	2	3	195
Joey Logano	0	1	3	185
Alex Bowman	1	2	3	183
Ross Chastain	1	4	4	180
William Byron	1	2	2	175
Martin Truex, Jr.	0	0	3	172
Aric Almirola	0	1	3	168
Chase Briscoe	1	2	2	166
Tyler Reddick	0	2	3	158
Kyle Busch	0	1	3	154
Austin Cindric	1	1	2	153
Kurt Busch	0	2	3	153
Kevin Harvick	0	0	2	153
Daniel Suarez	0	2	3	150

GOLF

LATE THURSDAY: PGA VALERO TEXAS OPEN
1st of 4 rounds, AT&T Oaks Course, San Antonio, 7,438 yards, Par: 72

Russell Knox	33-32—65	-7
Rasmus Hojgaard	36-30—66	-6
Matt Kuchar	35-32—67	-5
Denny McCarthy	34-33—67	-5
Aaron Rai	35-32—67	-5
J.J. Spaun	35-32—67	-5
Matt Jones	37-31—68	-4
Anirban Lahiri	32-36—68	-4
Luke List	35-33—68	-4
Henrik Norlander	33-35—68	-4
Ryan Palmer	34-34—68	-4
David Skinns	33-35—68	-4
Austin Smotherman	34-34—68	-4
Scott Stallings	35-33—68	-4
Brendan Steele	34-34—68	-4
Brendon Todd	34-34—68	-4
Peter Uihlein	34-34—68	-4
Aaron Baddeley	35-34—69	-3
Michael Gligic	36-33—69	-3
James Hahn	35-34—69	-3
Jim Herman	36-33—69	-3
John Huh	34-35—69	-3
Si Woo Kim	35-34—69	-3
Robert Macintyre	35-34—69	-3
Ben Martin	37-32—69	-3
Troy Merritt	36-33—69	-3
C.T. Pan	35-34—69	-3
Doc Redman	35-34—69	-3
Matthias Schwab	36-33—69	-3
Richard Bland	34-36—70	-2
Corey Conners	36-34—70	-2
Tyler Duncan	36-34—70	-2
Tony Finau	36-34—70	-2
Dylan Frittelli	36-34—70	-2
Scott Gutschewski	35-35—70	-2
Bill Haas	38-32—70	-2
Adam Hadwin	34-36—70	-2
Kramer Hickok	36-34—70	-2
Charles Howell III	34-36—70	-2
Chris Kirk	37-33—70	-2
Martin Laird	34-36—70	-2
Maverick McNealy	34-36—70	-2
Seung-Yul Noh	38-32—70	-2
J.T. Poston	36-34—70	-2
Davis Riley	35-35—70	-2
Patrick Rodgers	36-34—70	-2
Adam Schenk	36-34—70	-2
Henrik Stenson	34-36—70	-2
Kevin Streelman	34-36—70	-2
Richy Werenski	35-35—70	-2
Vince Whaley	38-32—70	-2
Gary Woodland	36-34—70	-2

LATE THURSDAY: LPGA THE CHEVRON CHAMPIONSHIP
1st of 4rds, Mission Hills CC, Rancho Mirage, Calif., 6,884 yds; Par 72

Jennifer Kupcho	32-34—66	-6
Minjee Lee	34-32—66	-6
Patty Tavatanakit	32-35—67	-5
Gabriela Ruffels	35-33—68	-4
Lydia Ko	33-35—68	-4
Georgia Hall	33-35—68	-4
Anna Nordqvist	34-34—68	-4
Caroline Masson	36-32—68	-4
Pajaree Anannarukarn	34-34—68	-4
Pauline Roussin-Bouchard	32-37—69	-3
Hinako Shibuno	34-35—69	-3
Annie Park	34-35—69	-3
Sarah Schmelzel	37-32—69	-3
Lexi Thompson	34-35—69	-3
Lauren Stephenson	33-36—69	-3
Emily Kristine Pedersen	35-35—70	-2
Celine Boutier	35-35—70	-2
Ally Ewing	35-35—70	-2
Pia Babnik	34-36—70	-2
Hannah Green	35-35—70	-2
Sei Young Kim	36-34—70	-2
Hyo Joo Kim	34-36—70	-2
Marina Alex	34-36—70	-2
Jaye Marie Green	37-33—70	-2
A Lim Kim	35-35—70	-2
Albane Valenzuela	35-35—70	-2
Charlotte Thomas	36-35—71	-1
Eun-Hee Ji	36-35—71	-1
Nanna Koerstz Madsen	36-35—71	-1
In Gee Chun	35-36—71	-1
Ariya Jutanugarn	34-37—71	-1
Matilda Castren	37-34—71	-1
Madelene Sagstrom	36-35—71	-1
Paula Reto	35-36—71	-1
Pornanong Phatlum	35-36—71	-1
Jodi Ewart Shadoff	34-37—71	-1
Jasmine Suwannapura	35-36—71	-1
Alison Lee	37-34—71	-1
Hee Jeong Lim	37-34—71	-1
Min Lee	36-35—71	-1
Ayaka Furue	35-36—71	-1
Jessica Korda	34-37—71	-1
Austin Ernst	34-37—71	-1
Nasa Hataoka	34-37—71	-1
Bronte Law	36-35—71	-1
Sophia Popov	35-36—71	-1
Charley Hull	36-35—71	-1
Na Rin An	35-37—72	E
Brooke Seay	34-38—72	E
Lindsey Weaver-Wright	35-37—72	E
Brooke M. Henderson	35-37—72	E
Wei-Ling Hsu	34-38—72	E
Brittany Lincicome	34-38—72	E
Yu Liu	37-35—72	E
Gurleen Kaur	37-35—72	E
Hye-Jin Choi	38-34—72	E
Lilia Vu	35-37—72	E
Leona Maguire	37-35—72	E
Megan Khang	37-35—72	E
Gaby Lopez	36-36—72	E
Wichanee Meechai	35-37—72	E
Xiyu Janet Lin	36-36—72	E
Cydney Clanton	36-37—73	+1
Moriya Jutanugarn	37-36—73	+1
Danielle Kang	37-36—73	+1
Jenny Shin	36-37—73	+1
Pernilla Lindberg	37-36—73	+1
Amy Yang	36-37—73	+1
Giulia Molinaro	37-36—73	+1
Sarah Kemp	37-36—73	+1
Stephanie Meadow	37-36—73	+1
Mi Hyang Lee	36-37—73	+1
Isabella Fierro	37-36—73	+1
Ashleigh Buhai	38-35—73	+1
Stacy Lewis	36-37—73	+1
Ryann O'Toole	38-35—73	+1
Chella Choi	37-36—73	+1
Alana Uriell	38-36—74	+2
Carl

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Sunday: vs. Louisville/South Carolina, NCAA championship game (if necessary), 8 p.m., ESPN

COVERAGE PRESENTED BY
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Final Four coaches Geno Auriemma, right, of UConn and Tara VanDerveer of Stanford, who faced each other in the semifinals on Friday, discussed the inequities between the men's and women's tournaments, a hot topic in Minneapolis. **COURANT FILE**

Tourney

from Page 1

men, where schools take in more revenue for advancing in the tournament, could close the revenue gap. Discussions about that are in preliminary stages, according to NCAA president Mark Emmert.

"At South Carolina, our success has allowed us to hit the budget a little more than most," Gamecocks coach Dawn Staley said. "Our administrators are for giving our student athlete an incredible experience. More times than not, if you're winning you know your administrators will find a way."

Others at the Final Four, such as Louisville coach Jeff Walz, said the weight room, as an illustration, was overblown. The larger issue, and solution, would be a system similar to men where schools get more revenue as they advance in the tournament.

"It was obviously a huge faux pas by our committee, to not know what the men were doing," Walz said. "But to compare that, was blown way out of proportion. The experience is what matters to me and they've had a great experience [in 2022] ... the signage, the things they've done, the players lounge in the hotel.

"It would be great to see shares of revenue given out as you move on in the NCAA Tournament for women as well. It might not be the same amount as the men. I've never been a big proponent of everything has to be the same. It doesn't have to be the same, we just need to be treated correctly."

VanDerveer agreed that's the key to closing the gaps. It would encourage schools to invest more in women's basketball, if there were a return on that investment.

"The unit structure that is used for the NCAA men's Tournament, I think, does generate a lot of support on individual campuses to have a great team and to support that team," she said. "I do believe that we should incorporate a unit structure over the next maybe 10 years, having there be financial reward for the teams being successful. I think that that would help the resources on each campus."

At UConn, where both the men's and women's programs have won multiple national championships, the men spend more money, but coach Geno Auriemma noted it's his choice to take fewer players on the road and travel less for recruiting.

"Each school has to make a decision how they want to spend the money that they have," Auriemma said. "You can mandate it all you want. Until the people at those universities decide to invest, we're always going to have this issue. Little by little they'll be forced to do it."

Things that are not necessarily financial are more important to Auriemma. The NCAA has shifted the women's Final Four back and forth to avoid conflict with the men, sometimes Friday-Sunday, sometimes Sunday-Tuesday.

"The teams that played Monday night in the NCAA Tournament, we got home at 2 a.m. Tuesday morning," Auriemma said. "And we left Tuesday to come out here. We practiced Wednesday, Thursday for the biggest game of the year. The guys finished Sunday, and they have Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and they play Saturday. I don't see that in the report. So all the things that people talk about, that does nothing to make your team better.

"You think Saint Peter's spends the same amount of money as Kentucky [in men's basketball]? It's not about that. It's about what kind of players do you have, what kind of program do you run, and you don't need a lot of money to do it. It helps. Don't get me wrong. It helps. But the 'swag bag' and the weight room and all that other crap that we talked about last year, that doesn't help these kids get ready for Friday night's game. An extra three days would help. So we should be talking about that stuff."

One suggestion, playing both the men's and women's tournaments in the same city, hasn't met with enthusiasm.

"Right now, we're in a good place and our tournament is really growing," Vanderveer said. "Ratings are up on television, and we just have to keep in the direction we're going and doing what we are doing."

VanDerveer, who began her career making $13,000 per year at Idaho where players had to wash their own uniforms, knows the women's tournament has come a long way, but there are miles to go and the fight goes on.

"It's really disappointing, and it's really discouraging to think that 50 years after Title IX, a federal law, that the law, number one, is not being enforced," she said. "It is sad for, I think, the women and the programs, and it's not just women. Some of the coaches are men, too.

"It's a law and why isn't the law enforced? When we went through the situation last year, the Kaplan report has brought attention to the disparity between what happened last year in the tournament, and I know we're trying to fix that. It will be a great time when you don't need Title IX. But unfortunately in our world, there's discrimination still against people, women, and we need to keep battling."

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com

HARTFORD ATHLETIC

Club is ready for Atlanta United 2 in season home opener

Staff report

The Hartford Athletic (0-1-1) will open their newly renamed Trinity Health Stadium in a USL Championship game against Atlanta United 2 on Saturday night.

This is the earliest home match in team history. Hartford has never played at home in April due to stadium preparations in 2019 and COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

The Athletic are coming off a 1-1 tie against the Tampa Bay Rowdies last Saturday, earning their first point of the season. Hartford's Joel Johnson scored early, beating Rowdies goalie CJ Cochran six minutes into the game. New Milford native Jake LaCava then tied it at the 39-minute mark for Tampa Bay.

Atlanta United 2 are coming off their first win of the season. Forward Jackson Conway led the way in the 4-1 victory over the Charleston Battery last Sunday, securing his first career hat trick after Charleston was reduced to 10 men in the second half.

The Athletic, currently tied for 12th place in the Eastern Conference, are 2-0-1 all-time in home openers.

The basics

Time: 7 p.m.
Venue: Trinity Health Stadium, Hartford
Opponent: Atlanta United 2, 1-3-0, ninth place in Eastern Conference
Last meeting: Aug. 24, 2019, Hartford won 3-2
TV: WCTX MyTV9
Livestream: ESPN+ or hartfordathletic.com/watch

Series history

The Athletic are 1-1 all-time against Atlanta, as the two teams have not met since 2019.

Building momentum

Athletic coach Harry Watling has conveyed his high expectations for the Athletic this season.

After picking up a point against a top Eastern Conference opponent last week, Watling was happy with his team's performance but said, "I think it's important that we don't get too carried away with one game, so we won't be too high off of this [draw], and we weren't going to be too low off of last week [losing 2-1 in Pittsburgh].

"This is only a really good point if we get three points in front of our home fans [this] week."

Goalkeeper Austin Pack has been reliable as Hartford's starting keeper through the first two games, making five saves on eight shots faced.

Grace

from Page 1

already — about how things are with this generation, how to communicate with them, the ways they are thinking. She's really an impressive person."

UConn added offensive analyst Noel Mazzone last season. The job description tends to be what individuals and programs make of it.

"Here, it means I'm working with Coach Allen and the receivers," Grace said in the statement. "Making sure we're looking at all our data, all of our numbers, and figuring out what that means for us day by day.

"I'm very much a bottom-up thinker. So when I see numbers, all I'm thinking is, what does that mean for us day by day? Right now we're using our data to make sure our learning is efficient and effective."

Grace coached college all-stars in the Tropical Bowl in January. Before going to Dartmouth, she was a scouting apprentice with the Los Angeles Rams and a training camp intern with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Grace played football at Germantown (Pa.) High as a kicker and defensive lineman and was an all-conference performer. She also played basketball and softball, then tennis and rugby at West Chester University. She later earned a post-graduate certificate in neuropsychology from Minnesota.

"I sent Coach Mora a resume when he got the job here and I had been cold texting him," Grace said.

After several meetings Mora offered her the analyst position. Grace aspires to be a coach on the field, and Mora will let her work toward such a role.

"Her greatest asset is her ability to communicate with the players — be tough and demanding but never demeaning," Mora said. "I see a high degree of trust immediately between the players and her, so I'd like to get her on the field, maybe down the line. There's nothing that would stop me from hiring someone as qualified as Mickey."

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com

UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Williams honored as nation's top shooting guard

By Dom Amore
Hartford Courant

MINNEAPOLIS — Christyn Williams, top scorer for the UConn women's basketball team, was named the top shooting guard in the nation in winning the Naismith Hall of Fame's Ann Meyers Drysdale Award on Friday.

Williams, a 5-foot-11 senior from Little Rock, Ark., is the first Husky to win the award, which was established in 2018. The award was announced at the Final Four where UConn was playing Stanford late Friday in the semifinals.

With UConn beset with injuries much of the year, Williams had to step up and steady the team. She played in 31 games, averaging 34.2 minutes, 14.7 points, shooting 46.8 percent, 34.5 on 3-pointers.

The other finalists were Sonya Morris (DePaul), Kierstan Bell (Florida Gulf Coast), Taylor Mikesell (Ohio State) and Taylor Robertson (Oklahoma).

Villanova

from Page 1

"It was just one of those games," recalled Wright, whose team roared to a 22-4 lead, dropped an astounding 18 3-pointers and was never challenged after about 5 minutes. "We've been on the other side of that. I remember looking down at Bill and thinking, 'I've been there before.' It just so happened it was a Final Four game."

Self and Wright are quick to say what happened in the Alamodome has no bearing on what will take place in the Superdome, where the winner will face Duke or North Carolina for the title. But the programs are the same, and so are some of the players, thanks to medical and COVID-19 waivers that have produced two of the oldest teams in Final Four history.

In fact, two-time Big East player of the year Collin Gillespie is still running the show for the Wildcats four years later, and Kansas big man Mitch Lightfoot is still giving the Jayhawks energy and attitude off the bench.

"It's fate, almost. Like it's written," Lightfoot said. "We played them in the Four and lost to them in 2018, so it's only fair to go out there and give them our best shot, and we're going to get their best shot. It's going to be a great game."

Kansas has been perhaps the most dominant team in the tournament, rolling into the Big Easy as the lone No. 1 seed still standing, while the Wildcats have become a feel-good story after losing star guard Justin Moore to an injury.

Yet both have flown under the radar. And they're content to let the epic Duke-Carolina showdown — their 258th meeting but first in the NCAA Tournament, and the last for retiring Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski — absorb the harsh spotlight that comes with playing on college basketball's biggest stage.

"It's perfect. We don't need anybody to talk us up," Jayhawks guard Christian Braun said. "We know who we are. We're Kansas. We're the only No. 1 seed and that's for a reason."

Villanova and Kansas will welcome fans back to the Final Four as the first onto the floor first Saturday night. Only about 8,000 were allowed in the stands of Lucas Oil Stadium last year, when the tournament was played entirely inside a COVID-19 bubble in Indianapolis. But a sellout crowd of more than 70,000 is expected at the Superdome, and thousands more are expected in the nearby French Quarter as four of college basketball's premier programs face off.

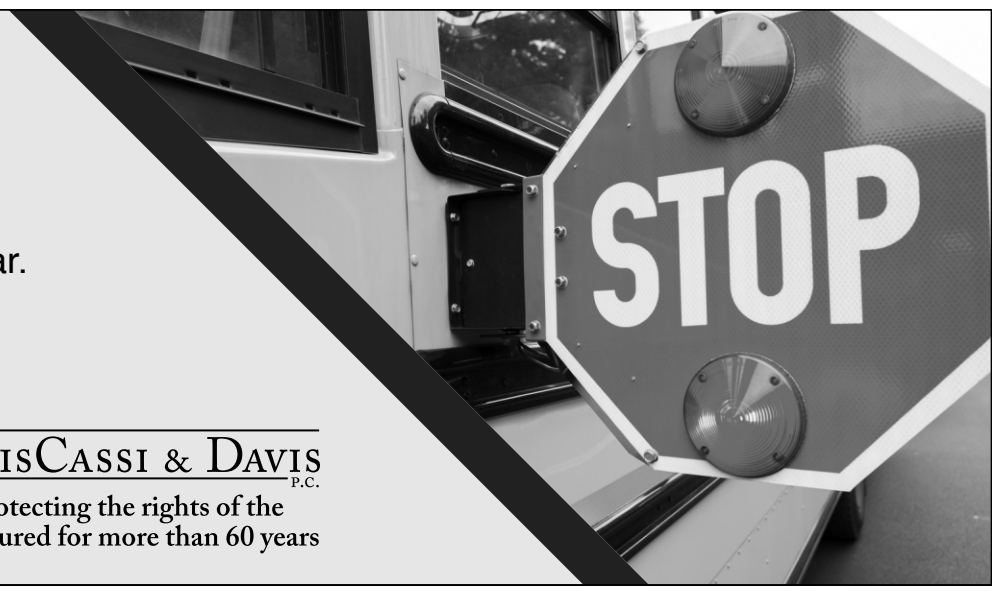
More on Moore

Moore, the Wildcats' second-leading scorer, had surgery this week after tearing his Achilles tendon in the final minute of their regional final with over Houston last Saturday. Now, one of their captains is left to cheer from the bench.

"It means everything to us to have him around," Villanova guard Eric Dixon said. "We miss having him on the court, but it's bigger than him as a basketball player. That's our friend, our brother. So it's good to have him around."

Did you know?

Passing vehicles causes an estimated two-thirds of school bus loading and unloading fatalities each year.

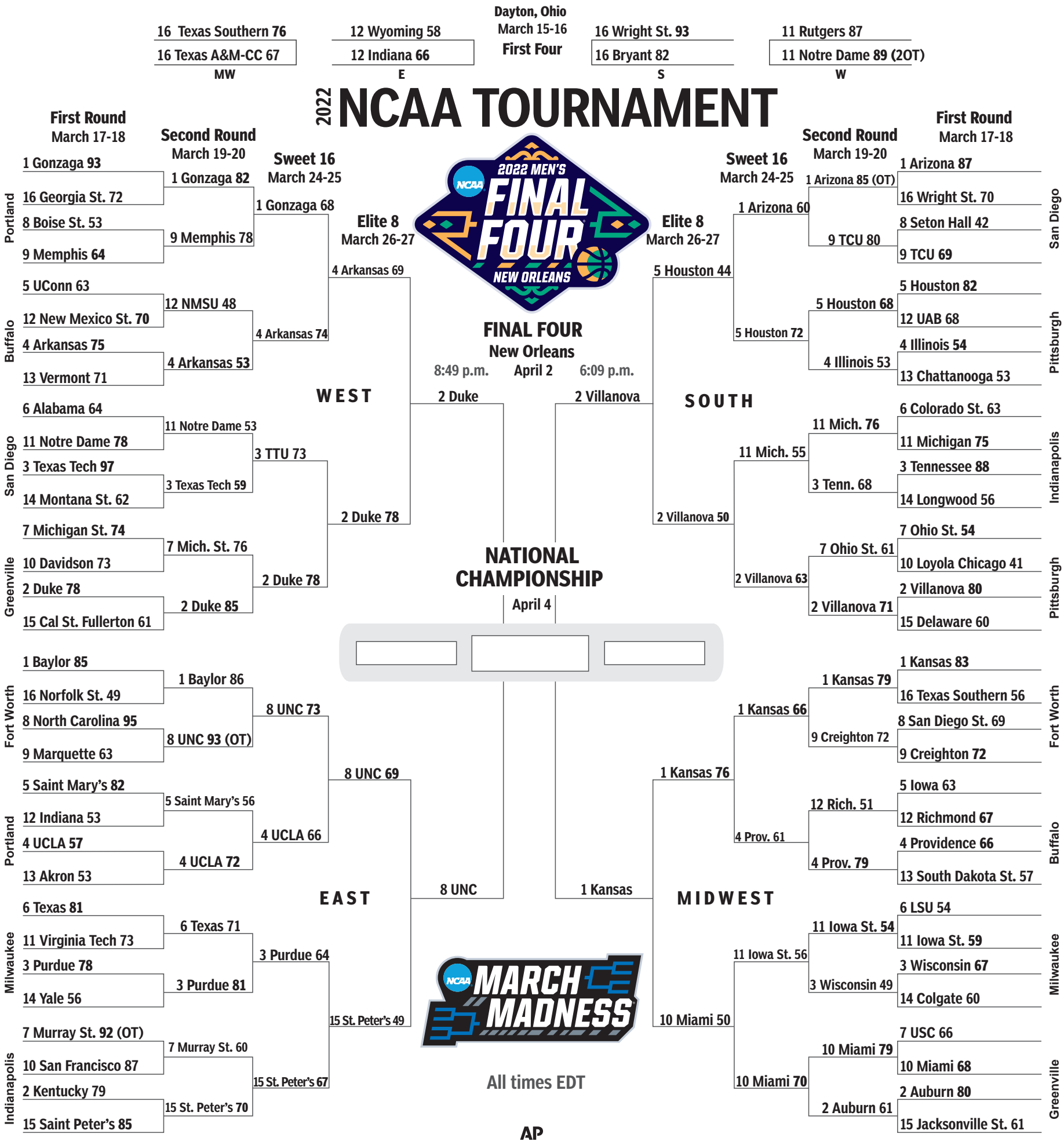


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NCAA TOURNAMENT FINAL FOUR



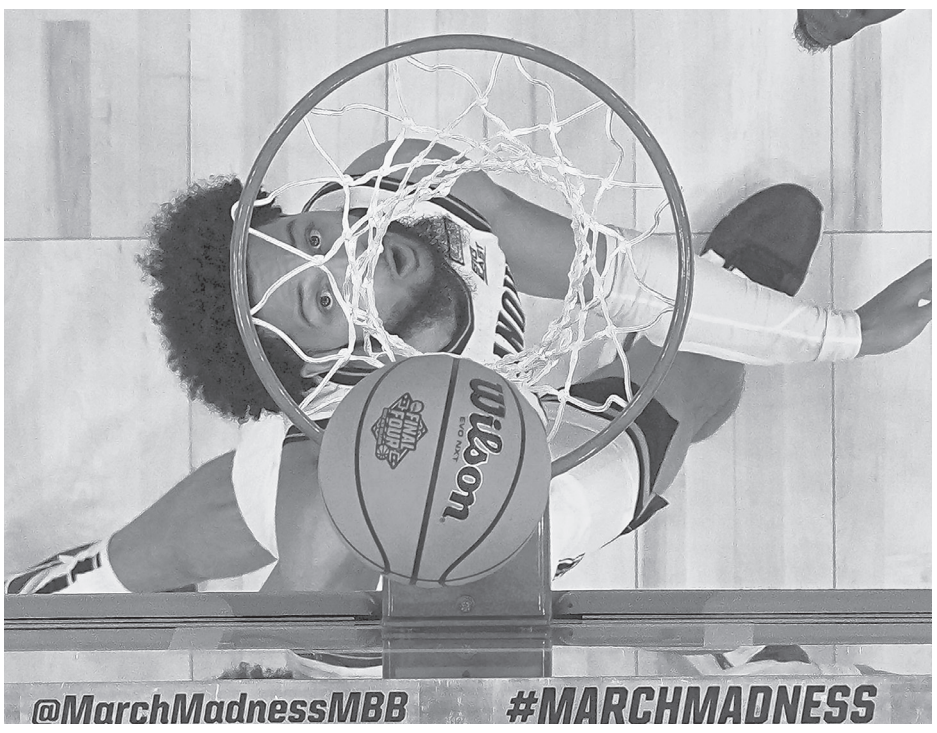
Villanova Wildcats (30-7) vs. Kansas Jayhawks (32-6)

6:09 p.m., Caesars Superdome, New Orleans, TBS

Top performers: Ochai Agbaji is averaging 18.9 points and 5.2 rebounds for the Jayhawks. Jalen Wilson is averaging 7.8 points over the last 10 games for Kansas. Collin Gillespie is scoring 15.6 points per game with 3.9 rebounds and 3.3 assists for the Wildcats. Jermaine Samuels is averaging 9.3 points and 5.1 rebounds over the past 10 games for Villanova.
Last 10 games: Jayhawks: 9-1, averaging 74.6 points, 40.2 rebounds, 13.7 assists, 5.3 steals and 6.4 blocks per game while shooting 44.1% from the field. Their opponents have averaged 60.5 points per game. Wildcats: 9-1, averaging 63.2 points, 32.2 rebounds, 9.1 assists, 5.0 steals and 2.3 blocks per game while shooting 38.2% from the field. Their opponents have averaged 54.0 points.

ADVANCED STATS
Kansas
Pomeroy rank: 4
Strengths: The Jayhawks rank seventh in the nation in adjusted offensive efficiency, and perhaps more importantly, they aren't really deficient in any major category. They're 18th in adjusted defensive efficiency, and their offense ranks in the top 70 in field goal percentage from both inside and outside the arc.
Weaknesses: Kansas doesn't have many glaring problems, but the Jayhawks are only 159th in defensive rebounding percentage, meaning a team that can attack the offensive glass could be a problem. Kansas is also 116th in turnover percentage on offense — not awful, but a good bit worse than the other three teams in this Final Four.
In this tournament: Opponents have made only 29.6% of their 3-pointers against Kansas this season. That's the type of thing that could even out over time — but it hasn't in this tournament so far. In the Sweet 16, Providence went 4 of 23 from long distance in a five-point loss to the Jayhawks. In the regional final, Miami went 3 of 21 against Kansas.

Villanova
Pomeroy rank: 9
Strengths: Foul Villanova at your own risk. Wildcats are shooting 83% on free throws, meaning they have a chance to break the Division I record of 82.2% set by Harvard in 1984.
Weaknesses: Villanova shoots only 49.9% from 2-point range, which isn't a huge problem given how much damage the Wildcats can do from 3, but it's an issue. Villanova is also another team that isn't great on the defensive glass.
In this tournament: The Wildcats rely a lot on the 3, and they also allow a lot of 3-point attempts. That arrangement tends to work out in Villanova's favor, and it has over the past four games. The Wildcats have made 35 3-pointers in the tournament, and opponents have made only 17.
— *Associated Press*



Villanova guard Caleb Daniels watches the ball during the first half of the South Region final against Houston on March 26 in San Antonio. **ERIC GAY/AP**

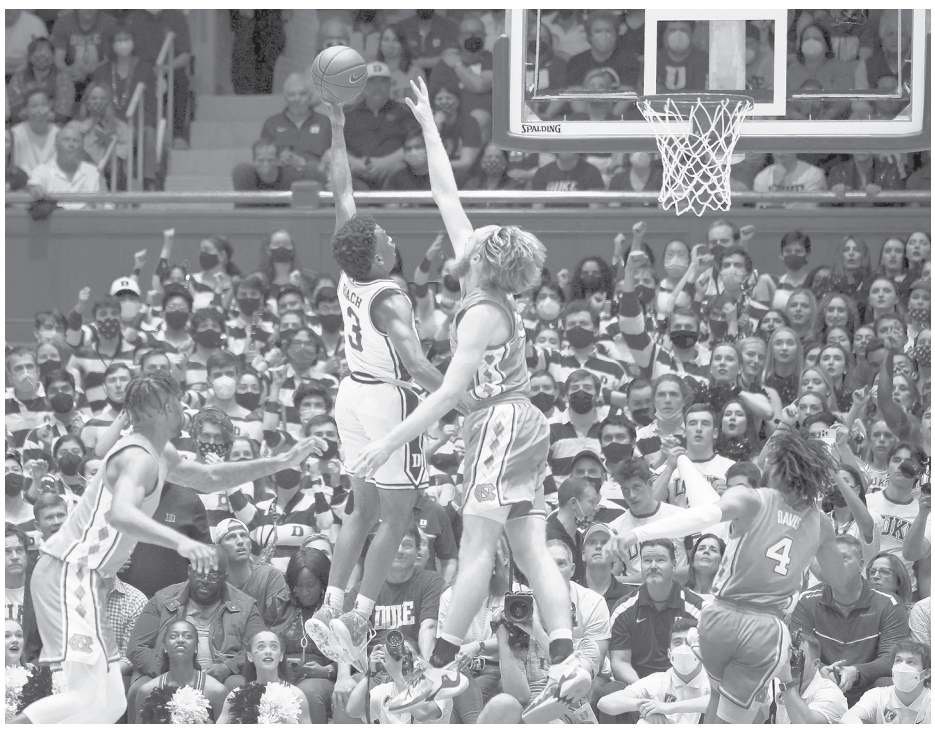
North Carolina Tar Heels (28-9) vs. Duke Blue Devils (32-6)

8:49 p.m., Caesars Superdome, New Orleans, TBS

Top perofrmers: Banchero is scoring 17.1 points per game and averaging 7.8 rebounds for the Blue Devils. Mark Williams is averaging 9.1 points and 6.1 rebounds over the last 10 games for Duke. Bacot is shooting 58.6% and averaging 16.5 points for the Tar Heels. Brady Manek is averaging 2.1 made 3-pointers over the last 10 games for North Carolina.
Last 10 games: Blue Devils: 8-2, averaging 80.1 points, 28.5 rebounds, 12.3 assists, 5.4 steals and 6.1 blocks per game while shooting 54.3% from the field. Their opponents have averaged 71.5 points per game. Tar Heels: 9-1, averaging 79.8 points, 41.6 rebounds, 16.6 assists, 5.2 steals and 3.8 blocks per game while shooting 44.0% from the field. Their opponents have averaged 68.9 points.

ADVANCED STATS
Duke
Pomeroy rank: 7
Strengths: The Blue Devils are the top team in the nation in adjusted offensive efficiency, and they've shown it in the tournament. They scored 78 points in 67 possessions in the Sweet 16 against Texas Tech, which has the country's top defense. Duke doesn't rely that heavily on the 3, which makes sense since the Blue Devils are shooting 56.3% from inside the arc, the eighth-best mark in the nation.
Weaknesses: The defense is 45th in adjusted efficiency. Specifically, Duke isn't good at forcing turnovers and has some issues on the defensive boards.
In this tournament: It's been an offensive show for the Blue Devils. In addition to that game against Texas Tech, Duke scored 85 points in 66 possessions against Michigan State in the second round, and 78 in 70 against Arkansas in the regional final. The Blue Devils are shooting 60% from 2-point range in this tournament.

North Carolina
Pomeroy rank: 16
Strengths: North Carolina is a tricky team to evaluate because its season stats are pedestrian for a Final Four team — but the Tar Heels seem to have turned a corner over the past month. According to the rankings at barttorvik.com, North Carolina has been the most efficient team in the country since March 1.
Weaknesses: On the season, North Carolina has an effective field goal percentage (eFG) of just 52.0. The Tar Heels' defense has allowed an opposing eFG of 48.8%, and the other three remaining teams are at 47.0% or lower.
In this tournament: In the NCAA Tournament, North Carolina's offensive eFG is 51.9%, not much different from the rest of the season. But the team's defensive eFG is an impressive 40.9%. And that's not just because the Tar Heels blew out 15th-seeded Saint Peter's. They also held top-seeded Baylor to an eFG of 40.1%.
— *Associated Press*


Duke's Jeremy Roach (3) attempts a shot against North Carolina's Brady Manek at Cameron Indoor Stadium on March 5 in Durham, North Carolina. **JARED C. TILTON/GETTY**

MOTORING



Audi's Skysphere concept car highlights the short overhangs, long wheelbase and large wheels extolled by Marc Lichte, Audi's design chief. **AUDI**

ELECTRIFYING LOOKS

For automobile designers, EVs offer a blank canvas

By Paul Stenquist
The New York Times

The internal combustion engine is exiting stage left. Although it provided great transportation and performance thrills for many years, it will no longer play a leading role. In its place under the hood will be, well, very little.

Ready or not, the curtain is going up on electric vehicles, or EVs, and most of their mechanical components don't sit where fossil-fuel engines once performed. Electric motors — far smaller than gasoline engines — are mounted between the wheels. A large transmission no longer gobbles up passenger space. No drive shaft is needed, thus no tunnel in the middle of the floor. The rear seat doesn't have to be positioned to provide room for a fuel tank.

The EV's power source — the battery — is heavy and large but of minimal height. Situated within the area protected by the wheels, it serves as part of the chassis — a structural member. Nearly all the parameters of vehicle packaging have changed.

Given a new and radically different platform on which to build vehicles, designers are rethinking their approach; the sheet metal that adorned gas-guzzlers can be a misfit here.

"A lot of us are still petrol heads, but there's something exciting about the way cars are evolving," said Dominic Najafi, chief exterior designer for Jaguar, which makes the I-Pace electric SUV. "We cherish the classic cars, but we welcome the future car."

To make a profit, the automakers must sell a lot of EVs, and maintaining two vehicle categories long term would appear to be financially unsound. Although conventional vehicles will remain in production for a decade or more, no one interviewed for this article mentioned new designs for the old guard.

"One has to think about EV design in a somewhat different way," said Bob Boniface, Buick's director of global design. "It's a more efficient form of transportation, so there is an expectation that styling aesthetics reflect that. Traditional grille shapes change due to different cooling requirements; aerodynamic devices and surfacing become more prominent."

How that translates to the road will be revealed this summer when Buick joins the electric crowd. Like other new General Motors EVs, its model will be created on the Ultium modular platform.

Kai Langer, design chief for BMW, sees electrification as an opportunity for designers.

"With combustion engines, there was a mandated configuration," he said. "In this new world, you have different options."

The size and weight of the battery compel it to be placed low and between the wheels, Langer said. That allows for a flat floor. The cowl — a structural element between engine compartment and passenger area — can be moved toward the front, increasing interior space.

"From a design standpoint, there's not really a downside to electrification," said Dave Marek, executive creative director for Acura. He added that his design team was focused on how an automobile relates to the occupants.



Acura's Precision concept car. Acura has focused on how a car relates to its occupants. **ACURA**

Marc Lichte, Audi's head of design, relishes the opportunities that electrification provides. "It is our enabler to design the most attractive Audis ever," he said, explaining that short overhangs, made possible by the absence of engine and fuel tank, are an aesthetic advantage. The longer wheelbase required to accommodate a battery is attractive, he added, and so are the large wheels needed to support the weight of the battery.

Although some EV designers want their vehicles to be seen as radically new and different with only a nod to the past, Ford views its electrification mission somewhat differently, bringing its legacy models into the future.

"Our strategy has been to electrify our popular nameplates," said Chris Walter, design manager for Ford's Mustang Mach-E. "The understanding is that people don't want it to look like a science project."

Tesla's Cybertruck looks like a science project. With triangular styling that, according to the automaker, will be teamed with outstanding ability, the truck could help make revolutionary EV styling acceptable — if it ever comes to market. Originally slated for a 2020 introduction, it has faced numerous delays.

Audi sought to preserve what it calls the single-frame design of its traditional front fascia but said the look would progress.

BMW's designers aim to maintain elements of their classic front-end styling as well.

With no history of fossil-fuel vehicles to color its thinking, upstart EV maker Lucid is not bound to tradition. Its Lucid Air lacks even a hint of the large grille and gaping front air intakes typical of luxury cars. One might say it was drawn without a nose.

"It is an advantage to not have to create a legacy front end," said Derek Jenkins, senior vice president of design and brand for Lucid.

Lucid designers started planning the look of their EV in 2015. They recognized that their first offering would have to be firmly anchored in the luxury segment, in part to justify the sticker price. But the luxury market was characterized by long hoods and imposing grilles — elements that seemed counterintuitive to EV design.

"How do we create something that has a strong identity, yet still looks worthy of the luxury price point? It was a challenge," Jenkins said. "Ultimately, we embraced it. We didn't have to work around a legacy identity. We saw that as an advantage, an opportunity to create a vehicle that looked nontraditional but not weird."

EVs out of reach for most US consumers

By David Welch
Bloomberg News

In a recent conversation with a car dealer in the Dallas area, I was asked who will afford all the electric vehicles that are coming to market in the next several years.

Despite all the hype for EVs, the dealer told me, many of his customers live paycheck to paycheck and bargain for every dollar of their monthly car payment. A $60,000 Tesla isn't happening.

The cheapest Tesla, a Model 3, now costs $47,000 to start. Ford's Mach-E has a similar base price if you include the delivery charge and taxes. Cadillac's Lyriq will start at around $60,000.

Who can afford these cars?

The average monthly payment for a vehicle of any kind these days is $691, according to researcher Cox Automotive.

NerdWallet.com, a website that helps consumers compare credit rates, says car buyers should spend 10% of their take-home pay a month on their vehicle. If we accept that as a rule of thumb, car buyers need to net about $7,000 a month to afford just the average new vehicle these days.

To afford an EV consumers need to be pretty well off. About one-third of American households make more than $100,000 a year and about 15% make between that and $150,000, according to IbisWorld. Since most households own two or more vehicles, that lowers the number of families that can afford EVs at today's prices. Because for a household to buy two EVs, you'd need two people making more than $100,000. Throw all of those numbers together and that tells me that less than 15% of U.S. drivers can afford a battery-powered set of wheels.



The 2023 all-electric Cadillac Lyriq SUV. **CADILLAC**

As battery costs come down, EVs will get cheaper. And lease pricing could put more of these vehicles within reach, too. But once automakers get past the early adopters, it may be tough to get buyers in Middle America to go green. At even the average price for a new car today, most Americans can't make the dollars work.



The 2022 BMW M240i xDrive Coupe. **DANIEL KRAUS/BMW**

AUTO REVIEW

New 2022 BMW M240i xDrive Coupe is fiercely fun

By Larry Printz
Tribune News Service

The average height of humans in industrialized nations has increased about 4 inches since the 18th century. Our homes have grown larger as well, having more than doubled since the 1950s to an average size of 2,584 square feet. So it's no surprise that our cars have gulped a gallon of jumbo grow as well.

Consider the 2022 BMW M240i xDrive. At 179.4 inches long, it's about the same size as the 2010 BMW 3 Series. Certainly the 2022 BMW M240i Coupe is larger than the model it replaces, being 3.5 inches longer, 2.6 inches wider, 0.1 inch lower and using a 2.0 inch longer wheelbase. The front track has increased by 2.8 inches while the rear track has grown 1.9 inches — which lends added stability.

But, oddly, the added girth doesn't translate into a roomier cabin. In fact, rear seat legroom has shrunk by nearly an inch, while rear seat headroom has been reduced by nearly 2 inches. But buyers don't buy the 2 Series Coupe for its spaciousness. They buy it for fun.

For the new model year, the 2 Series Coupe remains a classic rear-wheel-drive BMW, one that channels the brand's most coveted coupes. The new 2 Series is offered as the rear-wheel-drive 230i, and as the all-wheel-drive M240i.

2022 BMW M240i xDrive Coupe

Base price: $48,550
Engine: 3.0-liter turbocharged six-cylinder engine
Horsepower/Torque: 382/369 pound-feet of torque
EPA fuel economy (city/highway): 23/32 mpg
Fuel required: Premium
Length/Width/Height: 179.4/72.4/55.3 inches
Ground clearance: 5 inches
Payload: 840 pounds
Cargo capacity: 10 cubic feet

While the base 230i Coupe is powered by a 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine that generates 255 horsepower and 295 pound-feet of torque, the M240i is the far brawnier model. Credit its 3.0-liter turbocharged six-cylinder engine that now delivers 382 horsepower along with 369 pound-feet of torque.

The new M240i lacks the mammoth grille that has plagued the 4 Series Coupes and other BMWs. It still sports the angular sheet metal increasingly seen on BMWs, which no doubt aids its aerodynamic efficiency.

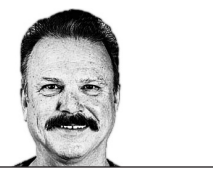
Open the M240i's doors and you're greeted by a comfortable cabin you'll immediately recognize if you're with the latest BMW models. It's loaded with the expected amenities, such as leather sport seats with adjustable lumbar support. The instrument panel is anchored by a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster and a 10.25-inch infotainment screen; an 8.8-inch infotainment display is standard.

To put it mildly, performance is fiercely fun. The silky 3.0-liter inline six provides incredible thrust, particularly in Sport or Sport+ mode. That's when the car becomes lightning quick, as do the transmission shifts. On the flip side, when the road surface turns rough, switching to Comfort mode transforms this sports coupe's ride, making it easy to live with every day.

That's what makes the 2022 BMW M240i so compelling. Like the legendary BMW sports coupes that preceded it, the M240i xDrive has rewarding driving dynamics, a potent powertrain, top-rate technology and a look that won't provoke sarcastic comments.

And it largely meets our enormous expectations for a modern ultimate driving machine.

Device to improve mpg?



Bob Weber
Motormouth



Fuel prices are displayed at a gas station on March 16 in Arlington, Virginia. **SAUL LOEB/GETTY-AFP**

Q: I've seen online a so-called EcoChip, which is supposed to reduce fuel consumption by up to 55%. Is this legit? Does it work? It plugs into the car's onboard diagnostic system. Will using it void my OEM or my extended warranty? Thanks, your thoughts would be greatly appreciated!
— J.M., Flossmoor, Illinois
A: When fuel prices spike, people go looking for something — anything — to boost their miles per gallon. I am skeptical of miracle devices and have seen a lot of useless stuff over the years. One early contraption was a pair of magnets taped onto the fuel line to "align the ions in the gasoline." Farmers know them as cow magnets. Various devices claimed to swirl the incoming fresh air to improve complete combustion. And so on. ... I am open to independent scientific data to support contraption claims. Until then, I will work on improving my driving habits.

Q: You say not to disconnect the battery and remove the power from any system or device modularly controlled, like power windows, because it may no longer function when power is restored. How do you replace a battery?
— F.S., Oak Park, Illinois
A: Although some people call it a battery saver, it is really a computer memory saver. This is a small device that plugs into the OBD-II (On-Board Diagnostics generation two) connector found under the dash. It's the same port through which professional technicians connect their diagnostic scan equipment. Inexpensive memory savers go for around $20. For power, it can be plugged into a battery bank via a cigarette lighter (power port) connector. You can also find memory savers having clamps that you connect to another car battery — just not your own.

Q: So how many readers have written to you so far advising that you apologize to the wrong singer in a recent column? Manfred Mann didn't write "Blinded by the Light." He and his Earth Band merely covered the early Bruce Springsteen tune (weakly in my humble opinion), as they did with Springsteen's "For You" and "Spirit in the Night." It might be prudent to confess to the error in your next column and apologize to Springsteen instead. You could hang the mistake on "we really are getting older." Thanks for the good work though.
— D.L., River Forest, Illinois
A: Mea culpa. My apologies to The Boss. Too bad, Mann.

Q: Your response to "P.G." from Virginia Beach, Virginia, about the 2006 Trailblazer not starting after being driven was spot-on. Years ago, we had a Chevy station wagon that had the same problem. I followed my father's advice and always carried a small hammer with us to tap the starter when it would fail (usually after driving a few hundred miles pulling our pop-up camper). Dad was a chassis engineer for GM for 45 years or so. His first advice was to replace the starter, but at the time we couldn't afford it. When we scraped up money for a new starter, I discovered that the heat shield designed to protect the starter from engine heat was missing. The combination of a new starter and installing the heat shield fixed the problem and I no longer had to bang on the starter to get the car running!
— P.V.H., Colorado Springs, Colorado
A: Thanks. There's nothing quite as satisfying as knowing when you get something right. It removes some of the heat.

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



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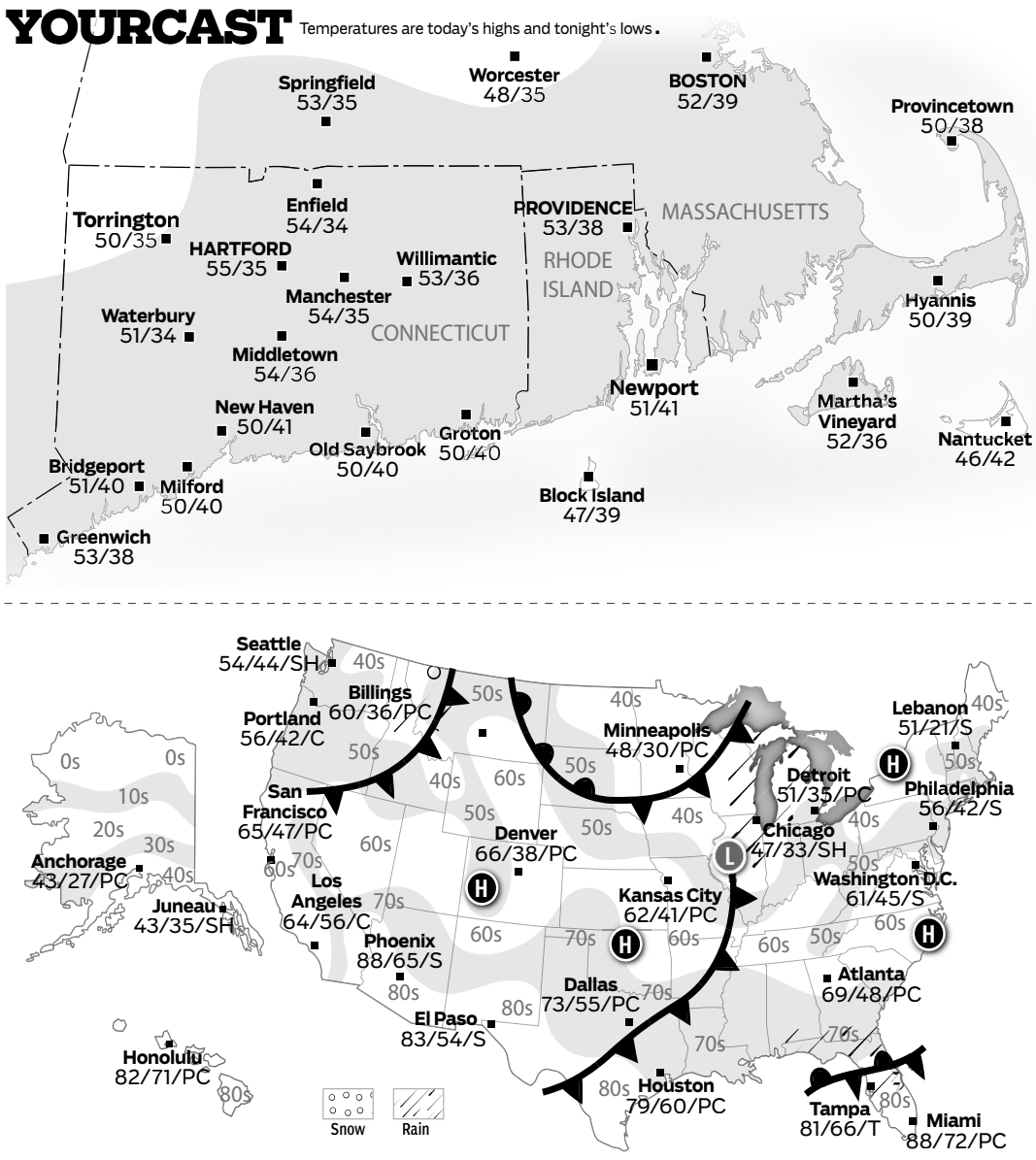
WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET
Mostly sunny and breezy. Northwest wind at 10 to 15 mph.	Cloudy with periods of rain or showers developing.	Partly sunny and seasonable.	Mostly cloudy and seasonable.	Periods of rain or showers. Breezy.
HIGH 55° LOW 35°	HIGH 50° LOW 36°	HIGH 56° LOW 36°	HIGH 58° LOW 43°	HIGH 52° LOW 43°

CONNECTICUT WEATHER
For the latest weather news throughout your day.
courant.com/weather

YOURCAST

Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



OUTLOOK

The month of March in the Greater Hartford area averaged 40.5 degrees or 2.7 degrees above normal. The high temperature averaged 50.6 degrees and the low temperature average was 30.4 degrees. There was 3.17 inches of precipitation which is 0.64 inches below normal. There was 5.2 inches of snow and that is 4.2 inches below normal. The highest wind gust during the month occurred on the 8th with a reading of 49 mph. High pressure over the eastern Great Lakes will bring mostly sunny skies and seasonable temperatures on Saturday with highs mainly in the 50s.

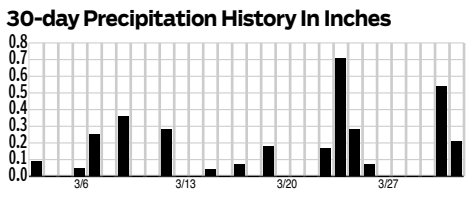
-Gary Lessor

ALMANAC

Precipitation In Inches	Total	Normal
Yesterday (by 7 p.m.)	0.73	0.12
Month to date	0.21	012
Total this year	9.69	10.34
Snowfall In Inches		
Yesterday (by 4 p.m.)	0.0	0.1
Total this year	31.5	50.7

Precipitation, temperature at Windsor Locks

30-day Precipitation History In Inches

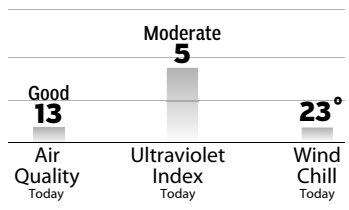


Tides	High	Low	Temp.
N.L. State Pier	10:57 a.m. 11:16 p.m.	5:15 a.m. 5:20 p.m.	44°
Saybrook Jetty	a.m. 12:08 p.m.	6:08 a.m. 6:13 p.m.	44°
Connecticut River at Portland	2:28 a.m. 2:51 p.m.	9:54 a.m. 9:59 p.m.	
Madison	12:09 a.m. 12:34 p.m.	6:24 a.m. 6:35 p.m.	43°
New Haven	12:29 a.m. 12:54 p.m.	6:48 a.m. 6:59 p.m.	43°
Stamford	12:33 a.m. 12:58 p.m.	7:02 a.m. 7:13 p.m.	43°

River Stage at Hartford: 7.56 feet at 6:30 p.m.

Boating Weather	L.I. Sound W	L.I. Sound E	B. I. Sound
	MSunny	MSunny	MSunny
Wind	W, 15-20	W, 15-20	NW/W, 20
Seas	2-4 ft.	3-5 ft.	3-5 ft.

Air Quality Forecast For Today



	Today	Tomorrow
Sunrise	6:33 a.m.	6:31 a.m.
Sunset	7:16 p.m.	7:17 p.m.
Moonrise	7:22 a.m.	7:46 a.m.
Moonset	8:58 p.m.	10:03 p.m.

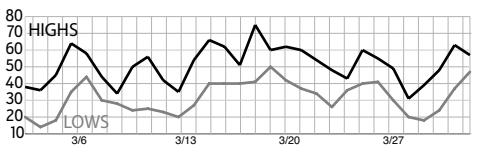
Moon Phase



Temperature	High	Low
Friday	57 at 2:21 a.m	47 at 3:10 a.m
Normal for date	54	33
Record for date	78 in 1967	9 in 1970
A year ago	56	44
Range this year	76	-2

Heating Degree Days	Season	Normal	Last Season
For July 1 - April 1	4750	5204	4840

30-day Temperature History



Atmosphere	High	Low
Barometer	29.64 at 7 p.m.	29.41 at 4 a.m.
Dew point	58° at 12 p.m.	33° at 7 p.m.

AROUND THE WORLD

Today's forecast in cities not included in the maps above:

NEW ENGLAND											
Bangor	47	24	PC	Baltimore	58	39	S	Nashville	63	40	C
Burlington	48	26	S	Bismarck	55	29	S	New Orleans	75	60	PC
Caribou	39	21	PC	Boise	59	34	PC	New York	55	43	S
Concord	51	25	S	Buffalo	49	31	PC	Okla. City	71	49	PC
Montpelier	43	21	S	Charleston	73	55	PC	Omaha	63	40	S
Mt. Wash.	19	15	PC	Cincinnati	54	37	PC	Orlando	84	66	T
Portland	52	30	S	Cleveland	50	36	PC	Pittsburgh	54	37	PC
Woods Hole	51	36	S	Indianapolis	51	35	PC	Raleigh	63	44	S
NATION				Jacksonville	79	58	PC	St. Louis	58	40	PC
Albany	53	29	S	Las Vegas	85	63	S	Salt Lake City	67	39	PC
Albuquerque	73	48	PC	Miami Beach	82	73	PC	San Antonio	83	61	PC
Atlantic City	55	39	S	Milwaukee	42	32	SH	San Diego	65	59	C
San Juan	87	75	PC	Kingston	88	75	S	Stockholm	42	24	PC
Tucson	86	57	S	Lisbon	63	45	C	Sydney	72	57	SH
WORLD				London	48	34	PC	Tel Aviv	79	56	PC
Amsterdam	45	27	S	Madrid	50	30	S	Tokyo	55	39	S
Athens	72	50	S	Mexico City	89	71	PC	Toronto	46	34	S
Bangkok	97	77	T	Milan	52	37	R	Vancouver	52	43	SH
Barbados	84	72	S	Montreal	45	32	S	Warsaw	36	25	SF
Beijing	59	37	C	Moscow	36	28	SN				
Beirut	77	60	PC	Nassau	86	70	PC				
Berlin	43	27	C	New Delhi	102	70	PC				
Bermuda	71	64	SH	Paris	46	32	C				
Budapest	46	36	R	Prague	37	28	SF				
Buenos Aires	73	63	S	Rio de Janeiro	79	68	R				
Cairo	96	66	S	Rome	52	39	R				
Cancun	87	73	PC	Seoul	55	39	S				
Dubai	95	66	S	Singapore	93	75	T				
Dublin	46	43	SH								
Edinburgh	46	30	PC								
Helsinki	37	28	PC								
Hong Kong	61	57	PC								
Istanbul	68	50	C								
Jerusalem	84	66	S								
Johannesburg	81	54	PC								

KEY: **S** Sunny, **C** Cloudy, **PC** Partly Cloudy, **R** Rain, **SH** Showers, **SN** Snow, **SF** Snow Flurries, **T** T-storms

Weather page produced by WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY Weather Center

SATURDAY'S HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

BASEBALL

Shoreline: Westbrook at Old Saybrook, 10a.m.; East Hampton at Morgan, 10:30a.m.; Valley Regional at North Branford, 10:30a.m.; Coginchaug at Portland, 11a.m.; Hale-Ray at Old Lyme, noon
SCC: Brookfield at Hand, noon
ECC: Windham at Putnam, 11a.m.; Bacon Academy at East Lyme, 11a.m.
NVL: St. Paul at Watertown, 11a.m.
Others: Vinal Tech at Rocky Hill, 11a.m.; Wilcox Tech at Platt, noon; East Catholic at Cheney Tech, noon; SMSA at University/Classical, 12:30p.m.; Somers at Plainville, 1p.m.; Middletown at Haddam-Killingworth, 1p.m.; Hall at Westhill, 2p.m.; Lyman Hall at New Canaan, 4p.m.

SOFTBALL

CCC-**South:** Bristol Eastern at Berlin, 11a.m.; Lewis Mills at Maloney, 2p.m.
CCC-**Inter:** Rocky Hill at Tolland, noon
Shoreline: Old Saybrook at Westbrook/Portland, 10a.m.; Hale-Ray at Old Lyme, 10:30a.m.; Morgan at East Hampton, 11a.m.
SCC: Hamden at Cheshire, noon
ECC: Putnam at Windham, 11a.m.; Bacon Academy at East Lyme, 11a.m.
NVL: Watertown at St. Paul, 1p.m.
Others: Rockville at Mercy, 11a.m.; Northwestern at Granby, 11a.m.; Wilcox Tech at Platt, 11a.m.; Suffield at Wethersfield, 11a.m.; Sheehan at St. Joseph, noon; Cromwell at Coventry, noon; Ellington at Haddam-Killingworth, 1p.m.; Somers at Valley Regional, 4p.m.

BOYS LACROSSE

CCC-**Inter:** Rocky Hill at Maloney/Platt, 11a.m.
SCC: Branford/East Haven at Sheehan, 12:30p.m.
Others: Trumbull at Conard, 10a.m.; St. Joseph at Old Lyme, 10:30a.m.; Middletown at Lyman Hall, 10:30a.m.; Norwich Tech/Windham Tech at Woodstock Academy, 11a.m.; RHAM at Waterford, 11a.m.; Cheshire at LaSalle Academy (R.I.), noon; Iona Prep (N.Y.) at Glastonbury, 1p.m.; Northwest Catholic at Granby, 1p.m.; Ledyard/Griswold at Old Saybrook, 1 p.m.

GIRLS LACROSSE

SCC: Amity at Cheshire, 10a.m.; Mercy at SHA, noon
Others: Fairfield Ludlowe at Hand, 10:30a.m.; Foran at Rockville, 11a.m.; Old Saybrook at Ledyard, 11a.m.; Bacon Academy at Rocky Hill, 11:30a.m.; Northwest Catholic at Granby, 1 p.m.; Windsor at Hamden, 1p.m.; Hall at Canton, 3:45p.m.

BOYS VOLLEYBALL

SCC: Hand at Xavier, 10a.m.
Others: Rockville at Newington, 10:30a.m.; Cheshire at Simsbury, 11a.m.; Darien at Farmington, 1p.m.

BOYS TENNIS

SCC: Lyman Hall at Sheehan, 10:30a.m.
Others: Wilcox Tech at North Haven, 2p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS

SCC: Lyman Hall at Sheehan, 1p.m.
NVL: Watertown at St. Paul, noon

FRIDAY'S COLLEGE RESULTS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

NCAA Div. I **Tourney**—Final Four
STANFORD VS. UCONN, LATE

BASEBALL

UCONN 4, KENT STATE 3
HARTFORD 10, STONY BROOK 3
BRYANT 7, CENTRAL 5
WESLEYAN 6, AMHERST 5
SACRED HEART 11, FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON 7
CANISIUS AT QUINNIPIAC, PPD.
NIAGARA AT FAIRFIELD, PPD.

SOFTBALL

BUTLER 6, UCONN 2
HAMILTON AT WESLEYAN, PPD.

MEN'S LACROSSE

TRINITY AT ENDICOTT, PPD.

SATURDAY'S COLLEGE SCHEDULE

BASEBALL

Stony Brook at Hartford (2), 11a.m.
Niagara at Fairfield (2), 11a.m.
Yale at Cornell (2), 11:30a.m.
Canisius at Quinnipiac (2), 11:30a.m.
Amherst at Wesleyan (2), noon
Eastern at Plymouth State (2), noon
UConn at Kent State, 1p.m.
Bryant at Central, 1p.m.
Fairleigh Dickinson at Sacred Heart, 1p.m.
Bates at Trinity (2), 2p.m.

SOFTBALL

Fairfield at Rider (2), noon
Brown at Yale (2), 12:30p.m.
UConn at Butler, 1p.m.
Hartford at UMass Lowell (2), 1p.m.
Central at Mount St. Mary's (2), 1p.m.
Southern Maine at Eastern (2), 1p.m.
Sacred Heart at Fairleigh Dickinson (2), 1p.m.
Bates at Trinity (2), 1:30p.m.
Elms at St. Joseph (2), 2p.m.
Quinnipiac at Canisius (2), 2:30p.m.

MEN'S LACROSSE

Marist at Quinnipiac, 10a.m.
Norwich at St. Joseph, 1p.m.
Hofstra at Fairfield, 1p.m.
Keene State at Eastern, 3p.m.
Penn at Yale, 3:30p.m.
Maritime at Trinity, 5p.m.
Sacred Heart at Wagner, 5p.m.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Marquette at UConn, noon
Keene State at Eastern, noon
Brown at Yale, noon
Sacred Heart at Howard, noon
Niagara at Quinnipiac, 1p.m.
Fairfield at Marist, 1p.m.
St. Joseph at Norwich, 2p.m.

MEN'S TENNIS

Tufts at Trinity, 10a.m.
Middlebury at Wesleyan, 10a.m.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

UConn at Boston University, 1p.m.
Tufts at Trinity, 2p.m.
Middlebury at Wesleyan, 2p.m.

ISLANDERS 3, RANGERS 0

Barzal, Varlamov pace Isles past rivals

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mathew Barzal had a goal and an assist, Semyon Varlamov stopped 27 shots for his 36th career shutout and the New York Islanders beat the rival Rangers 3-0 on Friday night.

Casey Cizikas and Matt Martin also scored for the Islanders, who have won three straight and seven of 10. Varlamov, who had 10 shutouts last season — including four against the Rangers — got his second this season.

Long considered out of the playoff picture, the Islanders pulled within 13 points of Washington for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference with 15 games remaining — one more than the Capitals.

Igor Shesterkin finished with 15 saves to fall to 32-10-3. The Rangers snapped a four-game win streak and lost for just the third time in 11 games. They lost at home for just the second time in seven games — both against the Islanders, who have won six of their last seven visits to Madison Square Garden.

Varlamov, starting on consecutive nights for the first time in his three seasons with the Islanders, had seven saves in the first period.

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Kesar pista *perfection*

The dreamiest desserts start with saffron and pistachio, a popular South Asian duo



Traditional South Asian desserts featuring saffron and pistachio at Tewari Brothers Mithaiwala in Mumbai on March 7. **SARA HYLTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES**

By Priya Krishna
The New York Times

In Japan, you can buy Kit Kats that taste like green tea. In Canada, Lay's potato chips can be ketchup flavored. And now, a kesar pista Snickers bar has arrived in India.

Kesar pista, or saffron and pistachio, is a familiar combination for South Asians. It features heavily in several traditional desserts like kesar rajbhog — saffron-flavored, nut-filled milk balls — or kesari burfi, fudgelike saffron confections often studded with pistachios.

Kesar pista is popular for a reason. The ingredients blend brilliantly, tasting even more luxurious, floral and complex together.

"Whether you look at the south, whether you look at the west, whether you look at the north, you will find this unique combination of spice and nut," said Varun Kandhari, the director of marketing for Mars Wrigley India, which introduced the new candy bar in December. "It's a very delicate flavor."

Neither saffron nor pistachios are native to India — saffron most likely came from the Middle East, and pistachios from Central Asia and the Middle East, said Sonal Ved, a Mumbai-based food writer and the author of "Whose Samosa Is It Anyway? The Story of Where 'Indian' Food Really Came From."

Saffron and pistachio "are contrasting, but they are also complimentary," Ved said. "One has color and aroma. The other has body, or creaminess, and texture."

The pairing's use in dessert was well documented during the Mughal Empire, when kesar pista kulfi was served to royals, according to "A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food" by food historian K.T. Achaya. The flavor also appears elsewhere in Asia, in Persian dishes like sohan, a saffron brittle topped with pistachios, and bastani, an ice cream typically scented with saffron, pistachio, vanilla and rose water.

Kandhari said that, if the kesar pista bar sold well in India, Mars Wrigley would consider taking it to other countries. (He declined to share current sales figures for the bar.)

The flavor lends itself well to traditional desserts, he said, and "equally works well when you look at some of the contemporary desserts."

Dessert shop owners in the United States know this to be true. Here, you'll find saffron and pistachio cupcakes, brittle, ice cream and doughnuts. This is how kesar pista could become even more mainstream, Kandhari said. "What led to matcha becoming very popular across markets was it was used across different formats."

Saffron pistachio blondies



SANG AN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Makes: One 9-inch pan
Total time: 1 hour, plus cooling and chilling
For the bars:
¾ cup raw, unsalted pistachios, plus more for garnish
1 cup all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon coarse kosher salt
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
¾ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
1 ¼ packed cups dark brown sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
½ cups white chocolate chips
For the frosting:
½ teaspoon packed saffron threads
1 ½ tablespoons whole milk
6 ounces cream cheese, softened
⅓ cup unsalted butter, softened
⅔ cup confectioners' sugar
Pinch of coarse kosher salt

1. Make the bars: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9-inch square baking pan with parchment paper so that the paper spills out over the sides of the pan, like wings.

2. In a food processor, pulse the pistachios until the nuts are very finely ground. Don't let them get pasty. Add flour, salt, baking powder and cardamom, and pulse to combine.

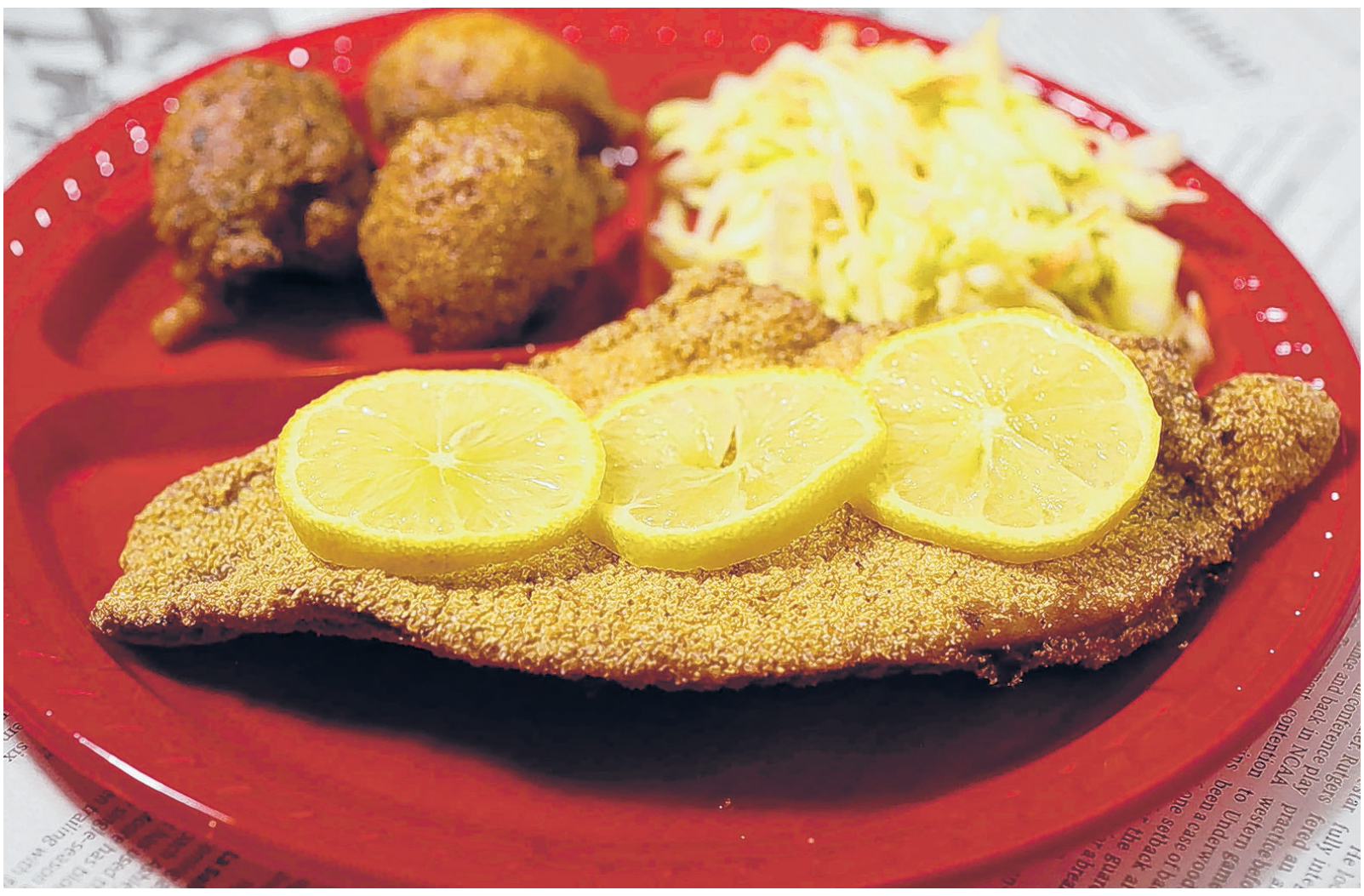
3. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together melted butter and brown sugar until smooth and shiny. (The butter will separate at first, then blend in.) Whisk in eggs until incorporated. Add the pistachio mixture and mix with a silicone spatula to combine. Gently stir in the white chocolate chips until evenly distributed. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and spread in an even layer.

4. Bake until the sides are brown and pull away from the pan, and the middle is slightly paler in color, 25 to 27 minutes. A toothpick inserted in the center will come out with a few crumbs attached. Cool completely in the pan on a rack.

5. While the bars cool, make the frosting: Finely grind the saffron threads in a mortar using a pestle or in a microwave-safe bowl using the back of a spoon. If needed, transfer the ground saffron to a microwave-safe bowl or to a small saucepan if you don't have a microwave. Stir in the milk, and microwave on high or heat over medium until the mixture is frothing around the edges but not boiling, about 30 seconds. Place the bowl in the refrigerator or freezer to quickly cool the mixture.

6. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, use an electric hand or stand mixer or a heavy whisk or wooden spoon to beat the cream cheese and butter until smooth. If working by hand, this takes some muscle. Add the confectioners' sugar and salt, and beat again until homogeneous and no clumps of sugar remain. Beat in the cooled saffron milk until well combined. The frosting will turn a bright golden hue.

7. Once the bars have cooled completely, scrape the frosting over the top and use a spatula to spread it evenly. Crush or chop some pistachios for garnish and sprinkle all over the top. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before eating. The bars keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or in the freezer for 1 month.



Serve breaded catfish with hush puppies and coleslaw for a delicious homemade Lenten fish fry. **HILLARY LEVIN/ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH PHOTOS**

HAVE YOUR OWN FISH FRY AT HOME

By Daniel Neman | St. Louis Post-Dispatch

In some places, the transformation from winter to spring is noted by the bloom of the first crocus or the arrival of the first robin.

For others, spring is heralded by the battering and frying of fish.

With spring comes Lent, and with Lent comes fish fries. It is an annual ritual as sacred and as inviolate as spring training.

But as much as we love supporting all of the local churches, Elks clubs, and American Legion and VFW posts, you don't actually have to go to them to have delicious fried fish. You can have your own fish fry at home.

Fish-fry fish comes battered and fried, breaded and fried, and baked. I battered and breaded mine, but I did not bake it because it is a fish fry, not a fish bake. I understand the difference in calories, but that's not the point.

The fish-fry fish that is battered and fried is usually going to be cod, though the technique also works with any number of other types of firm, white-flesh fish: haddock, pollock, halibut or even striped bass.

But cod is cheap and plentiful, which makes it the ideal fish for a fry.

The problem with battered fish is the batter. Under the wrong circumstances, it can be too thick and even bready.

So I turned to the writings of J. Kenji Lopez-Alt, who is either a science-minded food writer or a food-minded science writer. As I'd hoped, he had a couple of suggestions for making batter that is as light as air.

You do that by filling it with air, or at least carbon dioxide. He slowly mixes beer into this batter, which traps little bubbles of carbon dioxide in it. If you don't want beer, soda water will do the same trick.

He also keeps the beer (or soda water) ice cold, because colder liquid holds carbonation better. I put my beer in a bowl of ice water for an hour before cooking to make it as cold as possible. In addition, I mixed the cold beer with ice water, instead of regular water, because colder liquid also keeps gluten from forming — and gluten makes the batter thick.

It took just a little more effort than the unfussy way of frying battered fish, but I think it was worth it. My fish was as good as anything I've ever had at a fish-and-chips restaurant or my nearest VFW hall.

Breading is easier, of course, so I also breaded some catfish fillets. I did this two ways, once after first soaking them in milk and once without the soak.

Common wisdom holds that the milk makes catfish taste less fishy, and, in this case, the common wisdom is correct. I highly recommend soaking your catfish in milk, and it won't even add any time to your cooking process. Simply put the catfish in the milk when you begin to heat the oil, and you'll be fine.

The best fish fries also offer hush puppies.

Hush puppies are one of those great American dishes: cornmeal with a bit of onion, moistened with buttermilk and fried in oil. Nothing else is quite like them.

The ones I made were lighter than most, probably because the batter is made with both baking powder and baking soda. They puffed up enchantingly when they hit the hot oil, and they quickly cooked into golden balls of delicious fried cornmeal.

The natural condiment with fried fish is tartar sauce; nothing else gives a satisfyingly sharp pop of contrasting creaminess to fried fish. You can buy it in a jar, and it will be fine. You can make it yourself, and it will be fabulous.



Of course, a fish fry isn't a fish fry unless there is also coleslaw.

Creamy New York deli coleslaw

Makes: 6 to 8 servings
1 head red or green cabbage (2 pounds), cored and shredded
1 teaspoon salt, plus more for seasoning
½ teaspoon caraway seeds or celery seeds
½ cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons white vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon black pepper, plus more for seasoning
2 carrots, peeled and grated
1 small onion, minced

1. Toss the cabbage with 1 teaspoon salt and allow to sit in a colander for at least 1 hour or up to 4 hours. Meanwhile, toast the caraway seeds in a small skillet over medium heat until fragrant, about 3 minutes.
2. Rinse the cabbage, then pat thoroughly dry with paper towels. Whisk the toasted caraway seeds, mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, sugar and ¼ teaspoon pepper together in a bowl large enough to hold the salad. Add the cabbage, carrots and onion, and toss. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
— Recipe from "The America's Test Kitchen Family Cookbook"



Tangy tartar sauce offers a satisfyingly sharp pop of contrasting creaminess to fried fish.

It's actually a complex little sauce — complex in flavors, I mean. Mayonnaise is enlivened with minced shallot and emboldened with the addition of capers and chopped cornichons. Parsley adds a rounding note, sugar mellows the vinegar from the cornichons, and salt and pepper season it to perfection.

It all comes together in a matter of minutes, yet it makes your carefully fried fish taste even better.

Of course, a fish isn't a fish fry unless there is also coleslaw. Without coleslaw, it isn't a fish fry, it's just some fried fish.

I made a batch that emphasizes the cabbage, not the mayo. But the other ingredients (carrots, caraway, mustard, vinegar and sugar) also keep the cabbage from tasting too cabbagy.

It was just the way I like it. If you want more mayo, by all means add more mayo.

After all, it's your fish fry.

Hush puppies

Makes: 4 servings
1 cup yellow cornmeal
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon cayenne
1 medium onion
1 large egg
1 cup buttermilk
Vegetable or peanut oil, for frying (about 2 quarts)
1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees. The oven will be used to keep hush puppies warm while you are making more batches.
2. Whisk together cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cayenne. Grate onion on the large holes of a box grater into another bowl to yield 3 tablespoons, reserving juice. Add egg and buttermilk and whisk to combine, then stir into cornmeal mixture just until combined, with some lumps remaining. Batter will be as thick as a heavy pancake batter.
3. Heat 4 inches oil in a large, heavy pot or Dutch oven over high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reaches 360 degrees. Working in batches, drop batter by the tablespoon into oil. Fry, turning occasionally, until cooked through and deep brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer hush puppies to a towel-lined baking sheet in the oven while finishing the batches. Return oil to 360 degrees between batches. Serve warm.
— Recipe from "Martha's American Food" by Martha Stewart



Hush puppies are one of those great American dishes: cornmeal with a bit of onion, moistened with buttermilk and fried in oil.

Beer-battered fried cod

Makes: 4 servings
4 cups peanut or vegetable oil
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour, divided
½ cup cornstarch
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
Salt
¼ teaspoon paprika
¾ cup light-flavored beer (such as Budweiser) or soda water, ice cold
¾ cup ice water
1 pound cod fillet, cut into 4 (4-ounce) pieces
Note: To keep the beer or soda water extra-cold, put a refrigerated can or bottle in a large bowl of ice water 1 hour before using.
1. Heat the oil to 350 degrees in a large wok or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, whisk together 1 cup of flour, cornstarch, baking powder, baking soda, 2 teaspoons salt and paprika in a large bowl. Combine the beer and ¾ cup ice water in a small bowl.
2. Add remaining ½ cup flour to another large bowl. Toss the fish pieces in the flour until evenly coated. Transfer to a wire rack set on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Slowly add the beer mixture to the flour-cornstarch mixture, whisking just until batter has the texture of thick paint (you may not need all of the beer). The batter should leave a trail if you drip it back into the bowl off the whisk. Do not overmix; a few small lumps are OK.
4. Transfer fish to batter and turn to coat. Pick up one piece of cod from one edge, allowing excess batter to drip back into bowl. Quickly dip it into bowl of flour and turn to coat both sides, and then carefully transfer it to hot oil, lowering it in slowly to prevent splashes. Repeat for all 4 pieces. Cook, moving fish occasionally with wire-mesh spider or long fork, flipping fish halfway through cooking, until the cod is golden brown and crisp on all sides, about 8 minutes.
5. Transfer the fish to a paper-towel-lined plate and season immediately with salt. Serve with tartar sauce.
— Adapted from "The Food Lab" by J. Kenji Lopez-Alt

Breaded catfish

Makes: 2 to 4 servings
1 pound catfish fillets
1 cup milk
Vegetable oil, for frying
½ cup cornmeal
¾ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon black pepper
Pinch cayenne pepper
1. Pour milk into a bowl and soak catfish while you heat 1 ½ inches of oil in a large skillet to 375 degrees. Meanwhile, mix together cornmeal, salt, pepper and cayenne on a plate or in a bowl. When oil is at the proper temperature, remove 1 or 2 fillets from bowl, depending on size of your skillet. Dredge through cornmeal mixture and gently lower into hot oil.
2. Fry, flipping once, until golden brown on both sides and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels and repeat with remaining batches.
— Recipe by Daniel Neman

Extra-tangy tartar sauce

Makes: 8 servings
¾ cup mayonnaise
1 medium shallot, finely minced (about 2 tablespoons)
3 tablespoons capers, drained, patted dry and finely minced
6 to 8 cornichons, finely minced (see note)
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
2 tablespoons finely minced fresh parsley
½ teaspoon black pepper
Salt
Note: Cornichons are small, vinegary French pickles. They can be found in the pickle or olive section of a supermarket. For a slightly sweeter sauce, substitute 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish for the cornichons.
Combine mayonnaise, shallot, capers, cornichons, sugar, parsley and pepper in small bowl. Season to taste with salt. Transfer to airtight container and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before using. Tartar sauce will keep for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.
— Recipe from "The Food Lab" by J. Kenji Lopez-Alt

Wines from Argentina and Chile to seek out

By Eric Asimov
The New York Times



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

For many years I rarely found an emotional connection to South American wines.

Not because they were bad. Malbec from Argentina has been so popular that it's become almost a brand name, while Chile can be counted on for sound, moderately priced wines and high-end bottles of polish and gloss.

The wines seemed generic to me, well-made but rarely distinctive. I felt as if they were being shaped by the perceived desires of the market rather than offering their own distinctive characters.

Over the last six or seven years, however, I started to see a change. More and more, I was finding soulful wines that were cracking the stereotypes — or at least my stereotypes. These wines drew me in.

In February, I went shopping at New York wine stores and found bottles from Argentina and Chile that I eagerly recommend. If I had gone shopping in another month, with different bottles available, I might have put together an entirely different collection.

What sets this group apart? Unlike those earlier, more generic bottles, these all have a real sense of place and identity. Of the Chilean examples, I've especially been drawn to those from southern regions like Itata, where farmers have made wine for centuries from old vineyards for local consumption.

These bottles are by no means a complete picture. Chile offers some exceptional high-end bottles from producers like Viñedo Chadwick and Errazuriz. Argentine producers like the Michelini brothers are examining the potential of grapes not often associated with the country, like chenin blanc.

Then you have other countries like Uruguay, from where I've had some excellent tannats, and Brazil, which is making some unusual wines not readily available in the United States. Wine lovers prospecting for new flavors have a lot to explore in South America.

Here are the bottles I suggest, from lowest to highest in price:

Pedro Parra Secano Interior Itata Imaginador Cinsault 2019, 12%, $20: Pedro Parra is a Chilean geologist and terroir consultant who helps wine producers around the world hone an understanding of their vineyards. He also has his hand in some top South American wine producers, like Alto Las Hormigas in Mendoza. His own label focuses on old vineyards in the Itata region of southern Chile, especially those planted on granite soils. This cinsault comes from four vineyards, 45 to 70 years old, in the Secano Interior, the inland side of the coastal mountain range. Imaginador is light-bodied and pale ruby, almost delicate in texture, earthy and floral. It's the kind of red you can serve with seafood.

Gustavo Riffo Lomas de Llahuen Itata Portezuelo Pipeño 2020, 12.5%, $20, 1 liter: Pipeño is a wine consumed in southern Chile, typically fresh and unaged, mixed by blending whatever grapes grow in the vineyards nearby. It's the sort of wine that locals never imagined might find an audience internationally, yet that's exactly what's happened over the last decade. This delicious example is made of país, otherwise known as mission in the United States, organically grown by Gustavo Riffo. It's fresh and alive, with juicy flavors of fruit and flowers.

Rogue Vine Itata Valley Grand Itata Blanco 2020, 12.5%, $20: Rogue Vine has been one of the leaders in demonstrating the appeal of wines made from old vineyards in southern Chile. One partner in Rogue, Leonardo Erazo, has had his hands in several exceptional labels, including A Los Viñateros Bravos, another Itata producer. Rogue is especially drawn to hillside vineyards in which the vines are trained into goblet shapes, without trellises, often referred to as head-trained or bush vines in English, and gobelet in French. This white is 45% muscat, 30% riesling and 25% sémillon. It's floral, with an almost honeyed aroma, and lightly fruity, stony flavors.

Luyt Pipeño Blanco Itata Carrizal Familia Ernesto Soto 2021, 12.7%, $25, 1 liter: Pipeño can be white as well as red. Louis-Antoine Luyt, who is French and lives in Chile, makes his own wines while also highlighting interesting terroirs and growers. In this case, it's the Ernesto Soto family, which farms ancient bush vines in the Carrizal area in Itata. This cloudy, unfiltered white is made of muscat, chasselas, sémillon and torontel, otherwise known as torrontes. It is delicious and refreshing, fragrant with aromas of dried flowers and a kind of musky quality, beautifully textured with the flavors of tropical fruits.

Cara Sur Calingasta Valley Finca Maggio 2018, 13.5%, $25: Malbec is not the only red grape grown in Argentina. This red from the Calingasta Valley in San Juan, north of Mendoza, is said to be made of bonarda, a grape from the Piedmont region of Italy that is often called the second-most cultivated red grape in Argentina. However, studies have shown that the grapes called bonarda in Argentina can be any number of obscure grapes that came from northwestern Italy or southeastern France. The wine, which is aged in concrete eggs, is lightly tannic, with earthy, stony flavors. More than 15 different grapes in the vineyard are used for this wine, a mix that is called simply "viejas tintas," or old red grapes.

Herrera Alvarado Cuero de Vaca Marga Marga Valley 2020, 11%, $28: Wines do not get much more traditional than this red from the Marga Marga Valley in central Chile, east of Valparaiso. Carolina Alvarado and Arturo Herrera harvest old vines of pinot noir and make the wine in an adobe facility without electricity, using the methods of old farmers who have been making wine for home consumption for centuries. The juice is fermented over old cow hides and then pressed through the hide, using it as a sort of natural filter. Rather than tasting gamy or leathery, this is fresh and juicy, almost like a nouveau.

Carmelo Patti Mendoza 2017, 13.5%, $34: Carmelo Patti is an iconoclastic winemaker in Mendoza who's been doing things his way for a long time. His way means fermenting wines in concrete vats with only indigenous yeast and aging the wine until he decides it's ready to be released, often four or five years, several years longer than is typical. The 2017 is the current vintage. It's intense and unpretentious.

Zuccardi Uco Valley Paraje Altamira Concreto Malbec 2019, 14%, $45: Zuccardi is one of the top producers in Argentina, specializing in farming high-altitude vineyards in the Uco Valley, making both regional wines that are moderately priced and more expensive wines that examine the intricacies of Uco terroirs. Concreto is one of my favorite malbecs. Whole clusters of grapes, from rocky limestone soils, are simply fermented and aged in concrete vats. It is floral, herbal and lightly fruity, with intensely chalky flavors.

Altos Las Hormigas Mendoza Appellation Gualtallary Malbec 2018, 13.5%, $49: Altos Las Hormigas makes a terrific $12 malbec. This one, though more expensive, is not simply pleasing but compelling. Hormigas is an Italian-Argentine partnership that has teamed up with Parra, the Chilean geologist, to help explore the complicated terroirs of Mendoza. This bottle comes from a vineyard roughly 4,000 feet high in Gualtallary with sandy limestone soils. It's plummy, with an intense minerality that I find irresistible.

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Classic cornbread with an open mind

By Ben Mims
Los Angeles Times

One afternoon, as I was preparing a Southern meal for friends coming over for dinner, I realized I had forgotten to make the cornbread. But since I keep all the ingredients on hand at all times, I knew I wouldn't have a problem quickly baking a round. However, as I searched through my pantry, I saw that I had no cornmeal left, but in its place on the shelf, a lone bag of masa harina. "Corn for corn," I thought and decided to use it to make my cornbread.

The recipe — my grandmother's, which I have made countless times in my life — made with masa harina produced a cornbread that was distinctly different from what I was used to but was equally delicious. It had a much more pronounced corn flavor and was softer. It was one of those small experiments that turned out to be a much bigger deal in hindsight — the happenstance of its creation opened my mind to what cornbread could be.

Masa harina in cornbread isn't new, but it's still not as common as I think it should be. To understand the ingredient's brilliance in this application, we first must define what it is and isn't. Typically, the cornmeal you and I buy in grocery stores is made with dried corn that is ground to varying degrees of coarseness. It is usually made with dent corn, a variety of "field corn" that is covered in a hard starch exterior covering a soft starch center. (Polenta, a coarse ground cornmeal, is made with flint corn, which is mostly hard starch throughout.)

Masa harina, however, is made by first soaking the corn kernels in an alkaline solution like slaked lime or lye, which dissolves the hard outer shell and leaves behind the soft starch center. This center is then ground fine and dried to produce the masa harina. The soaking step makes the corn more easily digestible, but it also has the added benefit of making the corn taste more, well, corny.

Masa harina's softer and finer texture is precisely why it's suited for making doughs for tortillas and tamales. But it also serves to make an even more tender Southern-style cornbread when used in place of coarse cornmeal.



Masa harina and sugar give classic cornbread a more vivid corn flavor. **BEN MIMS/LOS ANGELES TIMES**

At the same time as this revelation, my partner and I were battling over whether to add sugar to cornbread.

I grew up in a household that didn't use it, and our cornbread was flatter and had a crunchy bottom. My partner, however, grew up with Jiffy cornbread mix and, thus, prefers a sweeter, cakier texture.

If you're from the South, you may know that the sweet-versus-unsweet cornbread debate is drawn almost exclusively along racial lines. In her award-winning 2017 Charlotte Observer article "Why does sugar in cornbread divide races in the South?" author Kathleen Purvis writes:

"Until early in the 20th century, Southern cornmeal was made with sweeter white corn and it was water-ground. When industrial milling came along, that changed. The steel-roller mills used yellow corn that was harvested before it was ripe, so it had less sugar. They eliminated the germ so [the corn] kept longer, but it had less corn flavor. And they ground it finer. You had to add a little flour to help it rise and sugar to add flavor."

Purvis goes on to posit that because this new yellow cornmeal was cheaper than that made with white corn, "Black cooks who had little money may have changed their cornbread to match the cornmeal they could afford."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, when using masa harina instead of cornmeal in my cornbread, I noticed a distinct corn-sweetness that I had never tasted in regular American cornmeal before — and I wanted more of it. So, I indulged my partner's wishes and added a spoonful of sugar to my next batch of cornbread, then a second spoonful the next time, and on and on until I landed at the perfect amount for my recipe.

The sweetness made the cornbread taste corn-ier, just like the masa harina. And so what began as a happy accident produced a cross-cultural bread that offered me a chance to learn from it the more I worked on it.

In my often-jaded mind when it comes to cooking, it was refreshing to have my previously held notions of my most nostalgic food get broken apart and built back up even better than before.

Masa harina cornbread

This cornbread recipe is pretty classic, save for the use of masa harina instead of cornmeal, which gives the bread a more tender texture and corn-forward flavor. Regular granulated sugar is used to sweeten the cornbread, but feel free to use honey, maple syrup or even light brown sugar instead.

Time: 45 minutes
Makes: 8 servings
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing and serving
¾ cup all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 ¼ cups masa harina
¼ cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
2 cups whole milk
2 large eggs
1. Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Grease and flour a 9-inch round or 8-inch square cake pan with butter and flour.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together the flour, masa harina, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk together the melted butter, milk and eggs until smooth. Pour the liquid ingredients over the dry ingredients, and stir until just combined (do not try to remove all the lumps from the batter).
3. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Place the pan in the oven and bake until golden brown at the edges and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 35 minutes.
4. Remove the pan from the oven and let the cornbread cool for 10 minutes. Invert the cornbread and remove it from the pan or cut into wedges and serve from the pan. Serve with more butter melted over the top of each wedge.



Smashing the cucumbers allows the dressing to add more flavor throughout the salad. **ASHLEY MOORE/AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN**

Flavorful cucumber dish has an Asian influence

America's Test Kitchen

This recipe is inspired by Pai Huang Gua, a dish that originated in the Sichuan region of China.

And when it comes to the main ingredient, why should you smash the cucumbers instead of neatly slicing them? When you smash them up, you expose more surface area and create little nooks and crannies that the flavorful dressing can sneak into.

If you don't have Persian cucumbers (the small ones), you can use one larger English cucumber, ends trimmed, cut crosswise into three equal lengths (but it will be harder to smash).

Smashed cucumber salad

Makes: 2 servings
5 (3-ounce) Persian cucumbers
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
1 ½ teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce
½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon sesame seeds, toasted
1. Place cucumbers in a bag and seal. Smash with a skillet until each cucumber is flattened and split into 3 or 4 spears.
2. Place a colander in a bowl. Tear cucumber spears into small pieces and place in colander. Add salt to cucumbers and toss to combine. Let cucumbers sit for at least 15 minutes or up to 30 minutes.
3. While cucumbers sit, stir vinegar, soy sauce, oil and sugar in a second bowl using a wooden spoon until sugar has dissolved.
4. Transfer drained cucumbers to the bowl with the dressing and stir to combine. Discard drained liquid. Sprinkle cucumbers with sesame seeds.

SERIOUSLY SIMPLE

Re-imagined Ukrainian borscht is comfort in a bowl

By Diane Rossen Worthington
Tribune Content Agency



This classic Ukrainian soup re-imagined is wonderful as a main dish for company as well as family. **DREAMSTIME**

Given the times we are living in, I want to share one of my most treasured recipes with you. Preparing this helps me to send prayers to those Ukrainians who are suffering so much. It may not be as good as serving it to them, but it helps me to feel closer to them at this time.

Years ago, I was introduced to a cabbage, beet and beef borscht by a doctor friend of mine who claimed it was "the real Ukrainian borscht." I took the doctor's recipe and reworked it into this one-pot meal. It is a welcoming bowl of comfort, which we all could use right now.

It is said that beets are what separates other borscht recipes from this Ukraine soup. I've also been told that another version uses sauerkraut instead of cabbage to add a fermented flavor to the soup.

This classic Ukrainian soup re-imagined is wonderful as a main dish for company as well as family. I like the added vinegar and brown sugar to bring the sweet and sour flavors together. I'm not sure that is authentic, but I can attest to just how delicious and satisfying it is. Make the soup up a day or two ahead of serving, as the soup improves when all the flavors meld together.

Feel free to add a cut up white or red potato or two to the soup. Serve it with big chunks of warm country bread and soft butter. A glass of a red Rhone varietal or a chilled mug of beer is my choice to accompany this soup.

Ukrainian borscht re-imagined

Makes: 8 to 10 servings
6 medium beets, cleaned and trimmed
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
3 pounds stewing beef, like chuck, cut into bite-size pieces, about 1 ½-inches
2 medium onions, finely chopped
2 medium carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 (16-ounce) can diced tomatoes, well drained
1 medium head green cabbage, cored and coarsely shredded
10 cups water
2 tablespoons tomato paste
6 sprigs fresh dill weed
5 tablespoons good quality red wine vinegar
⅓ cup brown sugar plus 1 tablespoon
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup sour cream, for garnish
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill weed or Italian parsley, for garnish
1. Cover the beets with an inch of water in a large saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until fork tender. Remove the beets from the pan, reserving 2 cups of the beet juice and place them in a colander. Run under cold running water and peel. Cut the beets on a cutting board into ¾-inch pieces and reserve.
2. In a 6-quart Dutch oven or soup pot, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil on medium-high heat. Brown the meat in batches, making sure not to crowd the meat, for about 5 to 7 minutes for each batch. Add more oil if needed. Reserve the beef.
3. Add the remaining oil and saute the onions and carrots for about 6 to 8 minutes or until nicely softened and lightly browned.
4. Add the 2 cups of the beet juice, reserved beef, tomatoes, cabbage, water, tomato paste and dill weed to the vegetables, making sure to scrape up all the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Bring to a simmer, partially covered, over medium heat and cook for 1 ½ hours or until the meat is tender when pierced with a fork.
5. Add the reserved beets, vinegar, brown sugar, salt, and pepper and simmer 5 more minutes. Taste for seasoning. You may need to adjust the sweet and sour flavoring to your taste.
6. Ladle borscht into deep soup bowls and garnish with sour cream and a sprig of dill weed or parsley.